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Displaced families' protest overshadows Manipur's Sangai Fest

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2 dozen firms to launch ₹40,000 crore IPO by Jan

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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PHOTO: PTI

I know my limits, no difference with CM: DKS

BENGALURU, 30 NOV

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar reaffirmed on Sunday that all is well within the State Congress a day after his breakfast meeting with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. Shivakumar said that there was no difference of opinion between the two but added that he was aware of his "limits". He dismissed JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswamy's charge that the power tussle had become communal, saying he never asked the Vokkaliga pontiffs to speak in his support. AHINDA groups (Dalit, minorities and backward classes) had thrown their weight behind Siddaramaiah. *—Agencies*

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2 BLOs die while working on SIR in Rajasthan, UP

JAIPUR/BIJNOR, 30 NOV

Two booth-level officers (BLOs) engaged in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls died in separate incidents in Rajasthan's Dholpur and Uttar Pradesh's Bijnor. In Dholpur, 42-year-old Anuj Garg collapsed at his home late Saturday night while uploading voter data. His family alleged he had been working under extreme pressure, saying he had been working late every night. In Bijnor, 56-year-old Shobharani, BLO in Dhampur, died of cardiac arrest. A diabetes patient, she had been unwell but continued working late on SIR forms. *—PTI*

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Hasina's extradition won't derail ties with India: B'desh

DHAKA, 30 NOV

Bangladesh on Sunday said its demand for the extradition of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina from India would not, by itself, hinder bilateral ties, even as Dhaka reiterated it expects her return "at the earliest". Foreign Affairs Adviser Mohammad Touhid Hossain said relations with India would "not get stuck on one issue", but noted that Hasina's status as a "declared convict" following her 17 November death sentence for "crimes against humanity" meant Bangladesh now expected prompt repatriation. Hasina, ousted after the July Uprising in August 2024, has taken refuge in India. *—PTI*

Cyclone Ditwah kills 330 in Lanka and 3 in TN

CHENNAI, 30

Indian Air Force and NDRF personnel continued to support Sri Lankan authorities on Sunday in rescue and relief operations after Cyclone Ditwah, which has claimed over 330 lives there. In Tamil Nadu, the cyclone brought sharp showers, leaving three people dead since Saturday — two in wall collapses in Tuticorin and Thanjavur, and a 20-year-old electrocuted in Mayiladuthurai. The state reported 149 cattle deaths and damage to 57,000 hectares of farmland. 'Ditwah', named by Yemen, refers to a lagoon on Socotra's northwest coast. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 4 & 5

EC extends SIR deadline by 1 week

This comes amid protests by BLOs over deaths

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

The Election Commission on Sunday extended by one week the schedule of the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in nine states and three Union Territories amid concerns over tight timelines affecting voters and poll officials.

The distribution of enumeration forms will now continue till 11 December instead of 4 December, with draft rolls published on 16 December instead of 9 December. The final voters' list will be released on 14 February, 2026, instead of 7 February. Officials said the extension followed consultations with chief electoral officers in the states and UTs where the exercise is underway.

Opposition parties have alleged at least 40 deaths of Booth Level Officers (BLOs) during the SIR, mostly suicides due to work pressure, questioning the feasibility of the timelines. The EC, however, rejected these claims, saying the exercise is proceeding smoothly.

Senior Congress leader Pramod Tiwari said the extension indicated the EC acknowledged the original deadlines were impractical.

The exercise, covering nearly 51 crore voters, is underway in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala, and West Bengal will go to the polls in 2026. In Assam, the revision is being conducted separately as a 'Special Revision'.

The SIR primarily aims to identify and remove foreign illegal migrants from the rolls

- Opposition parties have alleged at least 40 deaths of Booth Level Officers (BLOs) during the SIR, mostly suicides due to work pressure, questioning the feasibility of the timelines.

The SIR primarily aims to identify and remove foreign illegal migrants from the rolls.

Reacting, West Bengal TMC called the extension proof of the process being "ill-conceived and hasty", while BJP asserted the poll panel was ensuring a thorough exercise to retain legitimate voters and remove unauthorised names. Congress and Samajwadi Party leaders criticised the short extension, with Akhilesh Yadav calling the exercise "major trouble" for voters and BLOs, alleging possible disenfranchisement if the process is rushed. *— PTI*

BJP leaders such as Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Kiren Rijiju chair the all-party meeting in New Delhi on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

Oppn seeks SIR debate at Parl Winter Session

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

Opposition parties on Sunday demanded a discussion on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and national security in an all-party meeting convened ahead of Parliament's Winter Session, beginning Monday. The government said it would engage with all parties to ensure smooth functioning of the House.

Around 50 leaders from 36 parties attended, including Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, BJP president and Union Minister J P Nadda, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, and his deputies Arjun Ram Meghwal and L Murugan. While SIR dominated discussions, leaders also raised issues on national security following the Delhi blast, labour codes, and federalism, alleging governors were withholding bills and blocking funds in opposition-ruled states.

Rijiju, however, gave no firm assurance on SIR, saying the session's agenda would be decided by the Business Advisory Committee. "Parliament should not be stalled. Productivity will rise, democracy strengthened and respect for the House enhanced," he said.

At the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) meetings of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha respectively, the Opposition kept up its demand for a discussion on the larger issue of electoral reforms and not specifically on SIR. The government assured the opposition that it will convey its views on it soon.

The Winter Session, concluding on 19 December, will see a strong legislative push. Key bills include the Atomic Energy Bill, 2025, enabling private sector participation; the Higher Education Commission of India Bill, 2025, to establish a central regulatory body for universities; and amendments to the Jan Vishwas, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, Manipur GST, Repealing and Amending, and National Highways bills. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3 & 7

Teen from slum looks for food at wedding, killed

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

A 17-year-old slum dweller was shot dead by a Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) head constable after gatecrashing a wedding in search of food in Shahdara, police said on Sunday.

The incident occurred on Saturday during a wedding procession near the community centre at DDA Market. The police were alerted by a passerby and found the teenager, a resident of New Modern Shahdara, with a gunshot wound. He was rushed to Hedgewar Hospital, where he was declared dead.

The accused, posted in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, was traced and apprehended. A pistol suspected to be used in the shooting was seized. Initial investigation indicates the firing was not pre-planned but resulted from a sudden altercation.

According to police, the teenager had jumped a wall to access food at the wedding. Locals initially tried to stop him, but the CISF constable allegedly pulled out his gun in a fit of rage and shot him. *—PTI*

Sonia, Rahul face FIR in National Herald case

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

Delhi Police has filed an FIR against Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and seven others in the National Herald case, following a complaint by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) as part of its money laundering probe.

The FIR, registered by the Economic Offences Wing, names Sonia and Rahul Gandhi, Congress leaders Suman Dubey and Sam Pitroda, entities including Young Indian (YI), Dotex Merchandise Ltd, Dotex promoter Sunil Bhandari, and Associated Journals Ltd (AJL), along with unknown others. Charges have been pressed under sections 120B (criminal conspiracy), 403 (dishonest misappropriation), 406 (criminal breach of trust), and 420 (cheating) of the IPC.

The FIR builds on the ED chargesheet filed in April before a Delhi court, stemming from a 2014 private complaint by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy against alleged irregularities at National Herald. The ED used powers under section 66(2) of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act to have the FIR registered, providing additional facts beyond the scope of the original complaint.

The agency alleged a criminal conspiracy involving Sonia and Rahul Gandhi, late Congress leaders Motilal Vora and Oscar Fernandes, Dubey, Pitroda, and Young Indian, in a money laundering scheme linked to the fraudulent acquisition of AJL properties worth over Rs 2,000 crore for just Rs 50 lakh. The FIR claims the accused collected bogus rents and generated fake revenue through sham advertisements.

AJL publishes the National Herald newspaper and portal and is owned by Young Indian, of which Sonia and Rahul Gandhi are majority shareholders with 38 per cent each. The ED alleges Sonia Gandhi "abused" her position as former AICC president to convert public funds for personal benefit.The court is yet to take cognisance, with the next hearing scheduled for 16 December. *—PTI*

BENGALURU SHIVERS

Fog blankets Bengaluru on Sunday as Cyclone Ditwah brings drizzle and a dip in temperature to 13°C, leaving residents shivering. The chilly weather is expected to persist until 5 December PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

11 killed as 2 govt buses collide head-on in TN

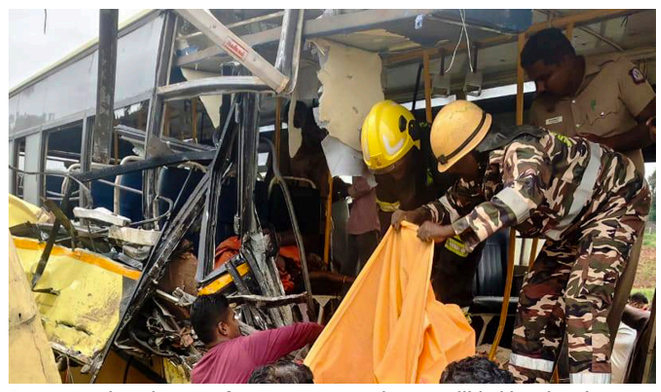
SIVAGANGA, 30 NOV

Eleven people were killed and more than 20 injured when two state-run buses collided head-on near Karaikudi in Tamil Nadu on Sunday, police said. The crash occurred about 15km from the town, close to Vivekananda Polytechnic College under the Nachiyarpuram police station limits in Sivaganga district.

A senior district police official said the victims, eight women, two men and a child, died on the spot. The injured were rushed to government hospitals in Karaikudi, Tirupattur and Sivaganga for emergency treatment.

Police said one bus was travelling from Kangeyam towards Karaikudi, while the other was operating on the Karaikudi–Dindigul route when they collided around 5pm. The cause of the accident is yet to be established. "It was a head-on collision. The reason is not clear; we are looking into it," the official said.

Rescue teams from the police and fire services reached the spot quickly, extricating trapped passengers and clearing the route for halted traffic. *—Agencies*



Rescue work underway after two state-run buses collided head-on in Sivaganga, Tamil Nadu on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

'CELEBRATE AS SHAURYA DIWAS'

R'than revokes order on Babri day in schools

JAIPUR, 30 NOV

Jaipur: The Rajasthan Education Department on Sunday withdrew its late-night order directing government and private schools to observe 6 December — the anniversary of the Babri Masjid demolition, as Shaurya Diwas. The directive had instructed schools to conduct cultural activities aimed at promoting patriotism and national unity.

The original order, issued by the Secondary School Education Directorate in Bikaner, said students would participate in events to "enhance their sense of nationalism." Education Minister Madan Dilawar had defended the decision, stating that Lord Ram symbolised the ideals of Indian culture and that the Ram Temple movement embodied "sacrifices, valour and unity."

However, the order drew immediate criticism from opposition leaders and minority groups. By Sunday morning, Dilawar withdrew it, citing the clash with school examinations scheduled for 5–6 December. Despite the withdrawal, he reiterated his commitment to teaching students about the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, arguing it would instil patriotism and cultural pride.

The now-withdrawn directive had instructed schools to organise cultural competitions, performances, exhibitions, yoga and prayer sessions, and awareness marches. Schools were also asked to invite military personnel, social workers and history experts to address students. Congress spokesperson Swarnim Chaturvedi condemned the move, calling the Babri Masjid demolition "a criminal offence" and accusing the state government of "twisting history" for children. *—PTI*

Haryana bodybuilder killed for objecting to eve-teasing

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

Rohit Dhankhar, 26, an international para-weightlifting athlete from Rohtak, was allegedly killed after he objected to a group of youths harassing women at a wedding in Bhiwani village.

Rohit's family has demanded the arrest of all those involved, describing the assault as a "planned murder." Rohit had come from Humayunpur village to attend a wedding with his friend Jatin, and had joined the baraat late at night. His family said that some men in the procession began misbehaving with women.

A man, identified as Rahul, allegedly drunk, made derogatory remarks. Rohit objected, and there was a brief argument. Guests intervened, and everything cooled down. Rohit and Jatin left after the function. They were heading home in a car when a group carrying weapons surrounded them, the family said. Jatin managed to escape, but the group caught Rohit and assaulted him. "There wasn't a single part of his body without injury," a family member said. After the attackers left, Jatin returned, found Rohit unconscious, and took him to a local hospital, where he died. *—Agencies*

As Cyclone Ditwah hit Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Andhra Pradesh, the City saw a drop in temperature, forcing citizens to wear warm clothes. Light rains also graced the City. The IMD has forecast light-moderate rains over the next few days ***PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD***

'No difference with CM, I know my limits'

DKS dismisses HDK's claims that the power tiff was communal

BENGALURU, 30 NOV

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar reaffirmed on Sunday that all is well within the State Congress ranks and there is no difference of opinion between him and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. However, he added that he was aware of his "limits".

"There is no difference between me and the CM," Shivakumar told press. "Being the (State) party President, I know my limits. Nowhere have I made any comments or expressed a difference of opinion with the CM.... Our aim is 2028 and 2029. We want to call an all-party meeting on various issues."

"I never took a single MLA whenever I went to Delhi. I could have taken at least 10 to 12 MLAs," Shivakumar added. He reiterated that all 140 MLAs in the State were his and that he didn't believe in factionalism.

Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar had a breakfast meeting on Saturday and presented a show of unity amid speculations about a possible change of Chief Ministers.

The High Command, led by Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, is expected to meet soon. Both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar have said they will abide by High Command's decision.

Shivakumar on Sunday also dismissed JD(S) leader and former chief minister HD Kumaraswamy's that the power tussle had taken a com- munal colour.

"I never asked for

Because of the weather in Bengaluru, everyone would like to come to Bengaluru. It is just like Shimla. This City has beautiful weather and culture.... For Congressmen, going to Delhi is like going to a temple

-DK Shivakumar, Deputy Chief Minister

(Vokkaliga pontiffs' support). I love all the castes... Did I ask them (seers) to speak on my behalf? No. It is their love and trust in me. Should I call that wrong?" he said. AHINDA groups (Dalit, minorities and backward classes) had thrown their weight behind Siddaramaiah.

Shivakumar said that he tried to save the Congress and JD(S) coalition government in 2018. "This is something which I and God know."

"Let him (Kumaraswamy) say whatever he wants, but I will not get hurt. I never backstab. I fight from the front," he added. On the BJP's criticism:, "The BJP say anything for survival. Should we take them seriously?" *—Agencies*

Truce is temporary, says Oppn; Cong blames media

DHARWAD, 30 NOV

The truce between Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his Deputy DK Shivakumar after days of shadow boxing is a "strategic adjustment", Opposition parties and political analysts in said.

BJP leader Prakash Sesharaghavachar said the breakfast meeting was "less about resolving every disagreement and more about restoring working harmony".

"This is just a temporary truce. Once someone becomes overambitious in politics, you can silence him for the time being but it will surge again," he claimed.

Veteran journalist and political analyst, Ramakrishna Upadhya said the Congress High Command has done just a patch-up job.

"They did not volunteer (for breakfast). They had been at loggerheads," he said. "Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar did exactly what they were told. But after all these months, is there any possibility of resolution?"

Congress spokesperson M Lakshmana insisted that there were no differences between the two leaders at any point in time. He claimed the media targeted Shivakumar, who is the party's "trouble shooter". *—PTI*

Govt hands over cyber fraud case to CID

BELAGAVI, 30 NOV

The Belagavi City Cyber Crime Police busted an international cyber fraud racket that allegedly targeted elderly US citizens. A total of 35 people have been arrested, and the investigation has now been transferred to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara hailed the police for exposing one of Karnataka's sophisticated cybercrime networks. The case drew national attention due to its international footprint.

Police said the accused were operating out of a rented commercial hall in Kumarswamy Layout in APMC Police Station limits. The masterminds hired 33 recruits from other states to work in what was portrayed as a legitimate call centre.

Police identified Sagar, a Gujarat resident, as the key suspect. He allegedly partnered with Tauseef, a resort owner from Dandeli in Uttara Kannada. The pair met at the resort where the plan to shift operations to Belagavi to avoid detection was made. A local contact, Aptaab, arranged the premises used for the fake call centre. Meals for the staff were supplied from Tauseef's establishment.

The gang acquired contact numbers of American senior citizens from the dark web and would call them, claiming that a parcel had been ordered in their name and needed immediate cancellation.

The targets were then instructed to contact another number sent by text, which routed back to another scammer in the same facility. Under fabricated warnings of compromised bank accounts, the victims were persuaded to buy gift vouchers and share the codes, enabling the criminals to instantly siphon off money.

Police Commissioner Bhushan Borase said that efforts are underway to track down Sagar. *—Salar News*

The massive stash of drugs was hidden in egg containers in the lorry. Police caught vehicle at a checkpost on the Hyderabad–Mumbai highway ***PHOTO: SALAR***

Bidar police seize 650kg of ganja

BIDAR, 30 NOV

Bidar district police seized 650kg of ganja worth Rs 6.50 crore and a Tata goods vehicle valued at Rs 8 lakh on National Highway-65 near Rajeshwar village in a late-night operation, officials said. Two men were arrested while transporting the contraband from Hyderabad to Solapur, late Saturday.

A special team was formed under Humnabad Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) Madolappa PS after credible intelligence indicated a large shipment was moving from Andhra Pradesh to Maharashtra. Police laid a trap at the checkpost near Humnabad on National Highway-50 (Hyderabad–Mumbai Highway).

When the lorry was stopped, the accused claimed it was carrying eggs. A thorough inspection, however, uncovered 6 quintals and 60kg of ganja hidden in specially designed compartments between egg cartons, Madolappa told Salar News.

The haul, with an estimated international market value of around Rs 6.50 crore, was destined for cities including Mumbai and Pune. Officers said the seizure dealt a major blow to the drug network.

A case has been registered at the Basavakalyan Rural Police Station. The two accused have been remanded to judicial custody. Police suspect they may have been previously involved in similar consignments.

"The names of the accused are being withheld," the DySP said. "If their names are revealed, the main accused may escape, especially since they are originally from Bidar but have been living in Hyderabad for the past 15 years." *—Salar News*

Varsity Registrar drives driver home on retirement day

DHARWAD, 30 NOV

Rudrappa, who served as a car driver for Vice-Chancellors and Registrars of Karnataka University for nearly 23 years, was in for a surprise on 29 November when he retired.

Registrar (Evaluation) Nijalingappa Mattihal drove Rudrappa and his family home, making the moment a memorable one in the university's history. Rudrappa was initially appointed as a temporary hand during the tenure of former Registrar Rajneesh Goel. He went on to work as the official driver for former Vice-Chancellors AM Pathan, M. Khajapeer, SK Saidapur, HB Walikar and Acting Vice-Chancellor A. Murigappa.

He also served for nearly eight years as the driver of several Registrars, including Nijalingappa Mattihal, who chose to honour Rudrappa's dedication by driving him back home, just as Rudrappa had faithfully done for him for years.

After 22 years and nine months of service, Rudrappa retired on 29 November.

"It has been my fortune to serve five Vice-Chancellors and six Registrars (Evaluation)," he said *—PTI*

CITY BEELINES TO CUBBON FLOWER SHOW

Defying the weather, a large number thronged to Cubbon Park to enjoy the ongoing flower show in Bengaluru on Sunday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

TIGRESS CAUGHT EARLIER

Hunsur forest team rescues 4 tiger cubs

MYSURU, 30 NOV

Two days after a tigress was tranquilised and captured near Gowdanakatte village on the fringes of the Nagarahole Tiger Reserve, Hunsur forest officials rescued her four cubs early on Sunday, bringing relief to anxious residents.

The tigress, aged around 10–12 years, had been frequently spotted outside the forest boundary over the past week, triggering panic after two farmers narrowly escaped an attack. Forest authorities intensified search operations following repeated sightings in Varanchi, Hosavaranchi,

Kalenahalli and Gowdanakatte villages.

The tigress was captured from a maize field on 28 November, as she reportedly returned to check on her cubs. Officials believe she may be the same big cat suspected of fatally mauling a two-year-old boy two years ago. After securing the mother, the department continued combing operations to trace the cubs.

On Sunday morning, a specialised task force, supported by four elephants, located the six-month-old cubs hiding in fields on the village outskirts. The team used nets to safely capture them within an hour. The cubs were given primary veterinary care and shifted to a rehabilitation facility, where they were later reunited with the tigress.

Forest officials said the successful operation has eased tensions in the cluster of affected villages. *—— Salar News*

Kannada film star MS Umesh dies at 80 after battling cancer

DHARWAD, 30 NOV

Veteran Kannada actor Mysore Srikantayya Umesh died on Sunday following a prolonged illness, his family said. He was 80. Umesh had been battling cancer for some time and was recently admitted to a hospital, where he breathed his last. His last rites were performed at Banashankari Crematorium.

The actor's career spanned over five decades, during which he appeared in more than 350 films.

Born on 24 April, 1945, in Mysuru, Umesh began his acting career at the age of four, performing in Master K Hirannaiah's theatre group for the play 'Lanchavatara'. He later joined Gubbi Veeranna's theatre troupe.

Umesh got his first major break in the film industry in 1960 with the lead role in 'Makkala Rajya'.

His film career then experienced a lull, forcing him to return to the theatre. He returned to cinema with a significant role in 'Katha Sangama' (1977), which was a turning point in his career.

He went on to act in notable films such as 'Nagarahole' (1977), 'Guru Shishyaru' (1981), 'Anupama' (1981), 'Kaamana Billu' (1983), and 'Venkata in Sankata' (2007).

Umesh worked alongside leading Kannada actors of his time, including Rajkumar, Vishnuvardhan, Ambareesh,

Srinath, Shankar Nag, Anant Nag, Saroja Devi, among others. He also shared the screen with Tamil icons Sivaji Ganesan and Rajinikanth.

Umesh received the Karnataka State Film Award in 1975 for Best Supporting Actor for 'Katha Sangama' and the Karnataka Nataka Akademi Award in 2013 for his work in theatre. *—PTI*

Nadda flayed for not halting speech after man collapses

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

A guard collapsed during a speech by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) President JP Nadda at the 'Sardar@150 Unity March' in Vadodara, Gujarat, on Saturday, yet neither Nadda nor other leaders on stage paused to assist him. The Congress party quickly condemned this inaction, asserting that it reflects the BJP's lack of compassion. They remarked on X, "If BJP leaders don't care about a person falling right in front of them, how will they care about your inflation, unemployment, farmers' crisis, and everyday struggles?" Earlier in his speech, Nadda accused Congress of attempting to erase Sardar Patel from history, while defending the construction of the Statue of Unity as a tribute to Patel that the Congress had questioned. ***—AGENCIES***

10L beneficiaries get credit assistance in J&K

JAMMU, 30 NOV

Over 10.07 lakh beneficiaries in Jammu and Kashmir received credit assistance during the first half of the financial year 2025-26, with banks dispersing loans worth over Rs 43,000 crore. Reported at the 17th meeting of the UT-Level Bankers' Committee chaired by chief secretary, Atal Dulloo, on Saturday to review the performance of banks and financial institutions in providing credit and other banking services. The chief secretary stressed upon the banks to improve lending under the priority sector with special emphasis on segments like agriculture, housing, education, and social infrastructure, which are important for the overall growth of the UT. Urging banks to come forward and provide hassle-free loans under schemes like the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), PM Vishwakarma, Mission YUVA, and Homestays. ***—PTI***

PHOTO: ANI

Kumbh Mela: MNS Chief, actor oppose axing of trees

MUMBAI, 30 NOV

MNS chief Raj Thackeray has opposed the cutting of trees for constructing a 'Sadhu Gram' ahead of the Kumbh Mela in Maharashtra's Nashik city, and said the BJP-led government should not allow the matter to escalate. Actor Sayaji Shinde agreed, stating he would oppose the government if it was adamant on removing the trees. Thackeray in a statement on Saturday accused the government of indulging in "opportunism". Nashik Municipal Corporation issued the notice, stating that The Sadhu Gram is being planned ss many as 1,670 trees, some of them said to be more than 100 years old, were marked for removal earlier this month. The notice received hundreds of objections. ***—PTI***

Indian nilgai killed in Pakistan; case filed against 12

LAHORE, 29 NOV

A nilgai (blue bull) that crossed into Pakistan from India was killed, by a group of over a dozen people, for allegedly ruining their crops. The group beat and injured a nilgai, fled when spotted by the wildlife team, and the animal later died from its wounds. The incident occurred in Bahawalnagar, around 400 km from Lahore, after the nilgai crossed the Indian border last week. Punjab police said on Saturday that they have registered a case against 12 people. The FIR has been registered on the complaint of Senior Wildlife Ranger Seemab Fatima, as the wildlife team did not act quickly. Police said that hungry nilgai often enter people's fields in search of food. ***—PTI***

Opposition accuses govt of derailing Parl over SIR

Oppn calls all-party meet 'formality', says agenda listed without talks

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

Congress and other Opposition parties on Sunday accused the Narendra Modi government of attempting to derail Parliament by curtailing discussion on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh called the all-party meeting "a mere formality", claiming the government listed a short discussion agenda without consulting the Opposition. "This 15-day session will be the shortest in Parliamentary history. Of the 13 Bills listed for passage, 10 have not been examined by the concerned Standing Committees," he said.

Congress Deputy Leader in the Lok Sabha, Gaurav Gogoi, alleged the government was undermining democracy, stifling Parliament, and ignoring parliamentary traditions. He demanded discussions on national security, air pollution, voter list integrity, foreign policy, and farmers' issues, accusing the Election Commission of bias during elections.

Gaurav Gogoi ***PHOTO: ANI***

In the Rajya Sabha, Congress deputy leader Pramod Tiwari said that excluding SIR from debate signalled the government's intent to stall Parliament, and criticised the Prime Minister for not participating actively in discussions.

- Congress Deputy Leader in the Lok Sabha, Gaurav Gogoi, alleged the government was undermining democracy, stifling Parliament, and ignoring parliamentary traditions.

Samajwadi Party leader Ramgopal Yadav warned his party would block proceedings if SIR was not debated. CPI-M leader John Brittas said the government would bear responsibility for any disruptions, adding that the Red Fort blast highlighted urgent national security concerns.

Trinamool Congress leader Kalyan Banerjee said her party was willing to cooperate if the treasury benches reciprocated. She called for debate on SIR, noting 40 lives had been lost in the exercise, and alleged that the government was allocating 70 per cent of House time to pass bills without discussion.

DMK's Tiruchi Siva said opposition parties were united in demanding SIR discussions, while CPI MP P Sandosh Kumar and BJD's Sasmit Patra raised national security, air pollution, and electoral reforms as urgent topics.

The Opposition stressed that SIR, with its alleged irregularities and fatalities, should be a priority, warning that parliamentary functioning could be severely affected if the government ignored the demand. ***—PTI***

NATIONAL HERALD CASE

PM-Shah continuing 'mischievous politics of vendetta': Cong

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

With Delhi Police filing an FIR against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in the National Herald case, the Congress on Sunday alleged that the "Modi-Shah duo" is continuing with its mischievous politics of harassment, intimidation, and vendetta against the party's top leadership.

Condemning the action, the opposition party also said the National Herald matter is a "completely bogus case" and justice will ultimately triumph.

In a post on X, Congress General Secretary in-charge communications **Jairam Ramesh** charged, "The Modi-Shah duo is continuing with its mischievous politics of harassment, intimidation, and vendetta against the top leadership of the INC. Those who threaten are themselves insecure and afraid."

Congress spokesperson and senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi said in a post on X that the FIR was "neither wine new nor bottle new nor glasses new".

Senior Congress leader Pramod Tiwari slammed the government over the development, alleging, "This is politics of vendetta and we condemn it. We never bowed down earlier, neither will we bow down now nor in the future. Gandhi family has always fought for the independence of the country and we will keep fighting for the freedom of democracy." ***—PTI***

Bihar poll loss sparks feud between Congress, RJD

PATNA, 30 NOV

Blame-shifting has intensified within Bihar's Mahagathbandhan after the alliance suffered a defeat in the Assembly elections, where the NDA retained power with more than 200 seats in the 243-member House.

Tensions rose after Congress leaders, following a review meeting in Delhi, said many of the party's 61 candidates preferred contesting alone rather than aligning with the RJD. Congress legislature party leader Shakeel Ahmed Khan said most candidates felt the alliance weakened their prospects, though the final decision rested with the high command.

Khan, a former JNU student leader, lost his Kadwa seat to JD(U)'s Dulal Chandra Goswami, who had been sidelined since his Lok Sabha defeat last year. Congress insiders said the NDA's 'jungle raj' narrative hurt the alliance by reviving memories of lawlessness associated with earlier RJD governments. They added that the tie-up alienated upper-caste voters once aligned with the Congress but now backing the BJP. The RJD, whose tally fell from 75 to 25, reacted with indignation, claiming the Congress benefitted from its vote base and accusing the party of overstating its strength. Seat-sharing friction, which triggered "friendly fights" across a dozen constituencies, further strained relations.

Rahul Gandhi, Tejashwi Yadav ***PHOTO: ANI***

The BJP camp, which capitalised on the discord, said the rift reflected the alliance's lack of ideological cohesion. Despite the exchange, Mahagathbandhan partners met on Saturday and unanimously endorsed Tejashwi Yadav as their leader ahead of the assembly's inaugural session. ***—PTI***

'Special Roll Observer' reviews Kolkata's SIR

KOLKATA, 30 NOV

Newly-appointed Special Roll Observer (SRO) Subrata Gupta on Sunday visited South 24 Parganas district to review the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

Gupta, a retired IAS officer appointed by the Election Commission (EC) on 28 November, inspected SIR work in Falta and said he was assessing whether directives were being followed. "There are a few complaints, and we will cross-check them," he said.

A senior official from the state CEO's office said Gupta would hold review meetings with district election officers, electoral registration officers and booth-level officers to monitor the distribution and collection of Enumeration Forms (EFs) amid complaints of malpractices and forms reaching unintended recipients.

Meanwhile, the EC is likely to conduct special camps in Kolkata's red-light districts on 2 and 3 December to address difficulties faced by sex workers during enumeration.

CEO West Bengal with Electoral Roll observers and other officers review progress of SIR, in Kolkata ***PHOTO: X/CEOWESTBENGAL***

> **At booth number 189 in the Narela assembly constituency, in house number 70 ...30 people have been shown as residents, even though only one person actually lives there. The remaining 29 names are bogus additions**
>
> -Digvijaya Singh, Congress Rajya Sabha member

The move follows rising concerns over problems in filling SIR forms. The initial phase of the revision runs until 4 December, with the draft voter list scheduled for publication on 9 December.

Three organisations working with sex workers had written to the Chief Electoral Officer on 21 November outlining widespread issues. ***—PTI***

'90,000 voter anomalies found during SIR in Goa'

PANAJI, 30 NOV

During the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Goa, officials identified anomalies for 90,000 voters, including those who are absent, deceased, have shifted, or possess duplicate voter cards.

Sanjay Goel, the state Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), reported that Goa has 1,185,000 voters, with 1,055,000 forms completed and 96.5 per cent digitised.

The draft electoral roll will be published on 9 December, allowing claims and objections until 7 February, 2026.

Goel clarified that the new roll would not affect the Zilla Panchayat election on 20 December, emphasising that any elector with voter cards in multiple states could face prosecution and imprisonment. ***—PTI***

Lottery baron's son to launch new party in Puducherry

PUDUCHERRY, 30 NOV

Former BJP functionary **Jose Charles Martin**, son of lottery baron Santiago Martin, is set to launch a new political party in Puducherry on 14 December with an eye on the Chief Minister's post, a close associate said on Sunday.

The 39-year-old managing director of the Martin Group, who oversees lottery operations in Maharashtra and Goa, has not ruled out alliances and is expected to explore a pact with actor-politician Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK).

Jose, who left the BJP in 2024 after disagreements with its local leadership, earlier contested unsuccessfully in the 2016 and 2021 Assembly polls. He has since been building a grassroots network through his JCM Makkal Mandram, which distributes welfare assistance across 25 of Puducherry's 30 constituencies. His outreach invited criticism from former Chief Minister V Narayanasamy, who accused him of being the BJP's "B team," a charge he rejected.

Jose said Puducherry lacked a clear development vision under existing parties and pledged to prioritise education, healthcare, tourism and the film sector. He also plans to hold talks with TVK after the party launch. ***—PTI***

Kerala Cong distances from rape accused MLA after raids

T'PURAM, 30 NOV

The Congress in Kerala on Sunday reiterated its distance from suspended Palakkad MLA **Rahul Mamkoottathil** as police intensified their probe into a rape case filed against him.

Party leaders said all necessary disciplinary steps had already been taken, stressing that Mamkoottathil remained under suspension. AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal said the party had "never evaded the issue," while senior leader K Muraleedharan noted that the MLA's recent appearances at local events were made independently and that he had since been instructed to stay away.

Palakkad DCC President A Thankappan added that the party had not authorised Mamkoottathil to join any civic poll campaign. Meanwhile, CPI(M) minister V Sivankutty alleged the Congress was divided on the matter and questioned its reluctance to expel him.

Earlier on Sunday, police searched Mamkoottathil's apartment in Kunathurmedu, collecting CCTV footage and documents to verify the complainant's claim that she was assaulted there in late May.

The MLA, currently untraceable, has filed an anticipatory bail plea to be heard Wednesday. His friend Joby Joseph, also missing, is accused of giving the complainant a pill to terminate the pregnancy. A special investigation team is probing charges. ***—PTI***

Ladakh LG residence officially renamed to 'Lok Niwas'

LEH, 30 NOV

The official residence and office of the lieutenant governor in Ladakh, previously known as Raj Niwas, has now been renamed as 'Lok Niwas'.

"This is a historic moment for Ladakh," stated the Office of the Lt Governor on social media platform X. "Today, Raj Niwas has been officially renamed as Lok Niwas, symbolising our deep commitment to people-centric governance and inclusive development."

The announcement was made alongside a photograph of Lt Governor Kavinder Gupta unveiling the new nameplate at the main entrance. Officials noted that the renaming reflects the administration's determination to enhance direct engagement with citizens, aimed at making governance more accessible. ***—PTI***

In 'Mann ki Baat', PM pushes citizens to learn Tamil

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** on Sunday urged citizens to participate in the Kashi-Tamil Sangamam at Varanasi and avail an opportunity to learn Tamil.

In his monthly 'Mann ki Baat' address, Modi said the fourth edition of the Kashi-Tamil Sangamam will commence on 2 December at the Namo Ghat in Varanasi.

"This year's Kashi-Tamil Sangamam has a very interesting theme: Learn Tamil - Tamil Karkalam," Modi said, describing the event as the confluence of the world's oldest language and one of the world's oldest cities.

He said the Kashi-Tamil Sangamam has become an important platform for all of those who are attached to the Tamil language.

"Whenever one speaks to the people of Kashi... they always say that they enjoy being a part of the Kashi-Tamil Sangamam. Here they get the opportunity to learn something new and meet new people," the prime minister said.

- In his monthly 'Mann ki Baat' address, Modi said the fourth edition of the Kashi-Tamil Sangamam will commence on 2 December at the Namo Ghat in Varanasi.

He said the people of Kashi are very eager to welcome their brothers and sisters from Tamil Nadu with full enthusiasm.

"I urge all of you to be a part of the Kashi-Tamil Sangamam. Along with this, do consider other platforms as well, that strengthen the spirit of 'Ek Bharat-Shrestha Bharat'," Modi said. ***—PTI***

BYPOLL INTIMIDATION

Akali leader's daughter released after late-night court verdict

CHANDIGARH, 30 NOV

Kanchanpreet Kaur, the daughter of an Akali leader, was released early Sunday morning following a Tarn Taran court order after the hearing in the matter lasted past midnight.

Kanchanpreet's counsel Arshdeep Singh Kler said she was released early Sunday morning after the court struck down the non-bailable offence registered against her in the FIR.

She was produced before the court on Saturday night, with the hearing beginning at 10pm and lasting till around 1am. The verdict came at around 4am.

Kanchanpreet is the daughter of Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Sukhwinder Kaur Randhawa, who recently lost the Tarn Taran bypoll to the AAP candidate.

Kanchanpreet Kaur ***PHOTO: ANI***

Speaking to the media in Tarn Taran, Kler said that during the hearing, arguments took place over the arrest of Kanchanpreet. He said the court acknowledged that Kanchanpreet's arrest was unconstitutional, besides raising a question over the police action.

During the hearing, police had sought a 10-day police remand of Kanchanpreet.

The police on Friday arrested Kanchanpreet after she was named in a case linked to alleged intimidation during the bypoll. The case was registered at the Chabhal police station in Tarn Taran on 11 November.

Kler said the police added a non-bailable Section 111 (organised crime) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) in the FIR to arrest her.

The SAD leadership has called the case a "political vendetta" by the AAP government.

Kanchanpreet was already facing four poll-related cases in which she has already got anticipatory bail. ***—PTI***

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Kerala DySP, who molested woman in custody, suspended

T'PURAM, 30 NOV

A Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) in Kerala has been suspended following allegations of sexual assault against a woman in police custody for prostitution. A Umesh, who was serving as the DySP of Kozhikode Rural, was suspended by the home department on the recommendation of the state police chief after an internal inquiry revealed he had exploited his position while previously serving at the Vadakkenchery station. The inquiry report highlighted "indisciplined, immoral and illegal activities" that tarnished the police force's image. Following the suicide of Cherpulassery Station House Officer Binu Thomas, the State Government noted grave misconduct leading to Umesh's suspension, pending further disciplinary action. *—PTI*

Sabarimala gold case: SIT records Tantri's statement

PATHANAMTHITTA, 30 NOV

The Special Investigation Team investigating the gold loss from the Sabarimala Lord Ayyappa temple has recently recorded the statement of Tantri Mahesh Mohanararu. Officials revealed that his testimony was taken weeks ago concerning permission allegedly granted to prime suspect Unnikrishnan Potti for the removal of gold-clad plates from the Dwarapalaka idols and Sreekovil door frames in 2019. Mohanararu, who was employed at the temple during that period, faced queries regarding procedural compliance for removing temple properties, which require "Deva Anujna" (divine permission). The SIT has previously questioned other Tantris and has held six individuals, including two former TDB presidents, in connection with the case. *—PTI*

37 naxals surrender in Dantewada, 27 with Rs 65L bounty

DANTEWADA, 30 NOV

In a significant development, thirty-seven Naxalites, including twelve women, surrendered in Dantewada, Chhattisgarh, with twenty-seven of them carrying a combined bounty of Rs 65 lakh. The surrender was part of the "Poona Margem" initiative aimed at social reintegration, according to Superintendent of Police Gaurav Rai. Key figures among those who surrendered include Kumali alias Anita Mandavi, Geeta alias Lakshmi Madkam, Ranjan alias Soma Mandavi, and Bhima alias Jahaj Kalmu, each with a reward of Rs 8 lakh. The surrendered individuals will receive Rs 50,000 in immediate assistance and various support for skill development and agriculture. *—PTI*

CAG terms Assam budget 2023-24 'unrealistic'

GUWAHATI, 30 NOV

The CAG has termed Assam's 2023-24 budget assumptions "unrealistic and overestimated," noting supplementary grants were approved despite unspent original allocations. The report revealed expenditure of Rs 1.39 lakh crore against grants of Rs 1.70 lakh crore, leaving savings of Rs 30,516 crore (17.95 per cent). Only 0.35 per cent was surrendered, reflecting poor financial management. Supplementary grants of Rs 30,210 crore were largely unnecessary, highlighting allocative inefficiency. Non-submission of 6,335 Utilisation Certificates (Rs 18,669 crore) and 730 annual accounts of autonomous councils and PSUs hindered audit and accountability. The CAG recommended realistic budgeting based on reliable resource estimates and departmental capacity, and review of departments. *—PTI*

Ditwah batters TN delta, heavy rain alert for Andhra

Chennai, Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, Thanjavur worst hit

CHENNAI/AMARAVATI, 30 NOV

Heavy rain continued to pound Tamil Nadu's Cauvery delta districts on Sunday as Cyclone Ditwah moved northwards along the coast, triggering flooding.

Ramanathapuram and Nagapattinam were among the worst hit, with low-lying areas inundated. The IMD warned of heavy to extremely heavy rainfall across several districts, including Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, Mayiladu thurai, Villupuram, Chengalpattu, Thanjavur, Thiruvarur, Chennai and Kancheepuram, as well as Puducherry and Karaikal over the next 24 hours.

Wind speeds could reach 60–70 kmph, gusting to 80 kmph. Sea conditions are expected to remain high before gradually improving by Monday morning. Fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea.

The Government of Tamil Nadu has deployed as many as 38 disaster response teams, with 10 additional teams joining. Mayiladuthurai recorded 140–220 mm of rainfall in 24 hours.

Ditwah, a name suggested by Yemen, refers to a lagoon. In neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, the IMD said Cyclone Ditwah would intensify rainfall across North and South Coastal Andhra Pradesh (NCAP and SCAP) and Rayalaseema as the system tracks along the Tamil Nadu–Puducherry coastline.

NCAP and Yanam are likely to see light to moderate rain with thunderstorms and squally winds of up to 55 kmph over the next two days. SCAP may face heavy to extremely heavy rain, while Rayalaseema could see heavy showers on Monday.

Winds may reach 70kmph in parts of SCAP and Rayalaseema. Andhra Pradesh Home Minister V Anita reviewed preparedness with district collectors, directing 48 hours high alert, rapid response to power disruptions, and readiness of rehabilitation centres. Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar instructed round-the-clock deployment of field staff and immediate restoration of electricity in affected areas. *– PTI*

High waves crash onto the Kasimedu shoreline in Royapuram amid rough sea conditions following Cyclone Ditwah in Chennai *PHOTO: PTI*

RAJ BHAVAN MARCH FOILED

Displaced families' protest overshadows Manipur's Sangai Fest

IMPHAL, 30 NOV

Manipur's state-organised Sangai Festival, returning after a three-year gap amid ethnic conflict, saw a sharply reduced turnout as protests by internally displaced persons (IDPs) intensified across Imphal.

Officials said the 10-day event, which ended on Sunday, drew only 8,000–9,000 visitors in total — barely 1,000 a day — compared with 2.19 lakh in 2022. Empty seats and deserted stalls marked the Hapta Kangjeibung venue, where stall owners reported negligible business. "Many stalls remained closed while others hardly had customers," said vendor Thai Gangmei. The only sizeable gathering was for a concert by British band Blue at Khuman Lampak.

Protests grew through the week as IDPs demanded permission to return home, arguing the government's decision to hold the festival contradicted their ongoing displacement. On Sunday, hundreds from Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, Imphal West and Imphal East marched towards Raj Bhavan, carrying placards such as "Displaced lives matter" and "Rights first, tourism later". They were stopped near Kangla Gate and diverted towards Uripok.

IDPs have clashed with security forces repeatedly since 21 November at several points in Imphal East and Bishnupur. More than 10 protesters suffered minor injuries as tear gas was used to disperse crowds. Ethnic violence between Meiteis and Kukis since May 2023 has killed over 260 people and displaced thousands. *—PTI*

Lee Ryan, Simon Webbe, Duncan James and Antony Costa of UK band 'Blue' arrive at BIR Tikendrajit Imphal International Airport for Sangai Music Festival 2025 *PHOTO: ANI*

323 Indian A320 planes get software upgrade

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

Aviation regulator, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Sunday announced that domestic carriers have completed software upgrades on 323 operational A320 family aircraft to address potential flight control issues and ensure passenger safety.

On Friday, Airbus warned that intense solar radiation could affect critical flight control data on many A320 planes, prompting urgent software modifications.

Initially, 338 A320s operated by IndiGo, Air India, and Air India Express were flagged; of these, 323 were operational, six under base maintenance, and nine in Air India's fleet later deemed exempt.

IndiGo airlines completed upgrades on all 200 of its operational A320s.

Air India performed updates on 100 of its 113 affected aircraft, with four under maintenance and nine exempt. Air India Express completed upgrades on 23 planes, with two still in maintenance for redelivery.

Following Airbus alerts and an Emergency Airworthiness Directive from the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), the DGCA issued its own Airworthiness Directive on Saturday, instructing operators to implement the software upgrades immediately.

The directive emphasised ensuring all affected aircraft have a serviceable Elevator Aileron Computer (ELAC). The functionality helps in mitigating the identified risk and maintain safe operations across domestic skies. *—PTI*

Muslim leaders condemn Jamiat chief Madani's 'Jihad' remark

BARABANKI/BAREILLY, 30 NOV

A section of Muslim community leaders has criticised Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind (MM) chief **Maulana Mahmood Madani** for his recent remarks on "bulldozer" actions and the use of the word "jihad", warning that such statements could fuel unrest.

Speaking at a Jamiat meeting in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, on Saturday, Madani alleged that certain groups were attempting to assert dominance through "organised efforts", including bulldozer drives, mob violence, and attempts to weaken Waqf institutions. He further claimed that court verdicts, including the Babri Masjid judgment, were influenced by

governmental pressure, and vowed to resist what he described as interference in religious matters.

His comments drew sharp criticism from several Muslim leaders. All India Pasmanda Muslim Mahaz National VP Wasim Raeen termed Madani's remarks "provocative" and said they were aimed at misleading Muslims. "Pasmanda Muslims will not fall into these traps. They are patriotic and stand with the country and its government, not foreign interests," he said, adding that the community had backed the NDA government in Bihar and would reject attempts to create tension.

Raeen also alleged that Madani's group had illegally occupied Waqf properties.

Reacting to Madani's assertion, "If oppression happens, jihad will follow," All India Muslim Jamat national president Maulana Mufti Shahabuddin Razvi Barelvi said the remark was "divisive" and intended to provoke. He stressed that Muslims respected the judiciary and Parliament and urged the community to avoid reacting to such statements to maintain peace. *—PTI*

Delhi's AQI shifts from 'very poor' to 'poor'

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

Delhi's air quality improved marginally on Sunday, shifting from the "very poor" to the "poor" category after several days of severe winter pollution.

The city recorded an overall AQI of 268, better than Saturday's 305, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). Data from the Sameer app showed five stations in the "very poor" range, while 33 reported "poor" levels. The minimum temperature settled at 8.3°C, two degrees below normal, with humidity at 97 per cent, the IMD said.

Amid the persistent pollution, former Puducherry Lt Governor Kiran Bedi called for stronger, coordinated and field-driven action, urging top authorities, including the prime minister, to personally monitor progress.

In a series of posts on X, she said officials must "breathe the air themselves" by visiting polluted sites and shift from "self-care to public care". She criticised fragmented governance, reliance on temporary fixes and the widespread use of air purifiers in official spaces, questioning how insulated officers can gauge outdoor conditions.

Bedi also sought a unified air-quality authority, daily enforcement on waste and dust violations, and periodic virtual reviews led by the PM to ensure accountability. *—PTI*

Techie held for misbehaving with air hostess in flight

HYDERABAD, 30 NOV

A software employee travelling from Dubai to Hyderabad was arrested for allegedly misbehaving with an air hostess onboard, police said on Sunday.

According to the cabin crew's complaint, the Kerala native, appearing intoxicated, touched the attendant while she was serving passengers on Friday. After landing, he reported a missing passport. When staff searched his seat, they found a note carrying "obscene and abusive" remarks against the crew. A case under Sections 74, 75 and other relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita was registered, and he was remanded to judicial custody.

One held, hunt on for another for molesting woman inside car

In a separate incident, Kolkata Police arrested a 24-year-old man for allegedly molesting a woman inside a car on the EM Bypass. The woman, waiting at a bus stop on Friday night, was allegedly forced into the vehicle, made to consume drugs and molested before being dropped near the Maidan area.

Her statement was recorded at SSKM Hospital, and searches for two other suspects are underway. *—PTI*

DRIVER ARRESTED

Mercedes SUV rams into three in Delhi, killing 1

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

A 23-year-old man died and two others were injured after a Mercedes G63 SUV allegedly rammed into them near a mall on Nelson Mandela Marg in Delhi's Vasant Kunj early Sunday, police said. The crash occurred at 2.33am.

Officers found the SUV in a mangled state and three restaurant employees from Ambience Mall — aged 23, 35 and 23 — lying injured. Rohit, 23, from Chamoli in Uttarakhand, was declared dead at hospital, while the others are undergoing treatment.

The driver, Shivam, 29, of Karol Bagh, has been apprehended. He was returning from a wedding with his wife and brother.

A Mercedes SUV turned over after it allegedly rammed into three near a mall in Vasant Kunj area, New Delhi *PHOTO: PTI*

Police said the vehicle lost balance after a road diversion and veered into an auto stand. The car is registered to Shivam's friend. *—PTI*

DONATES BLOOD TOO

Odisha couple weds with Constitution oath

BERHAMPUR, 30 NOV

A couple in Odisha's Berhampur solemnised their marriage by taking an oath on the Constitution and donating blood, urging guests to do the same.

Preetipanna Mishra, 40, and B Bhanu Teja, 43, exchanged garlands on Friday and pledged to begin their life together by upholding constitutional values. The couple, along with several attendees, donated blood, contributing a total of 18 units.

Mishra, a native of Berhampur, works as a system analyst with a private firm in Hyderabad, while Teja, who hails from Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh, is a scientist with a Bengaluru-based company. The two met at a seminar in Hyderabad a few years ago and stayed in touch before deciding to marry.

The initiative for the Constitution-themed ceremony came from Mishra's mother, Bidyutprabha Rath, a retired government employee and Odia novelist. Rath had organised her son's wedding in a similar manner in 2019 and reached out to Teja's parents, who agreed to the plan. "The Constitution is a holy book for every Indian. People must understand the ideals enshrined in it," she said.

Mishra said she hoped the ceremony would encourage others to adopt meaningful wedding practices. The Humanist Rationalist Organisation, which helped facilitate the event, said it supports marriages that avoid caste, horoscope-based matching and dowry. HRO's Ganjam unit secretary, K Nandeshu Senapati, said at least five such Constitution-oath weddings have been held in Berhampur over the last five years. *—PTI*

Defiant Nanded woman weds boyfriend's corpse

NANDED, 30 NOV

In a shocking display of grief and love, 21-year-old Aanchal Mamidwar "married" the body of her boyfriend, Saksham Tate, 20, in Nanded district, Maharashtra, after he was allegedly killed by her father and two brothers. Videos of the act and her call for their execution went viral.

Police said the killing occurred Thursday evening in the old Ganj area, when a fight broke out between Saksham and Aanchal's brother Himesh Mamidwar.

Himesh allegedly shot Saksham in the ribs and struck him with a tile, killing him instantly. Himesh, his brother Sahil, 25, and father Gajanan Mamidwar, 45, were arrested.

On Friday evening, Aanchal arrived at Saksham's home during his funeral preparations, claiming the symbolic marriage would make their love "immortal."

She demanded capital punishment for her father and brothers, citing caste-based opposition to their three-year relationship.

Police noted both Saksham and Himesh were history-sheeters and once friends. Six individuals face charges of murder, unlawful assembly, rioting, and violations under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, SC/ST Act, and Arms Act. The accused have been remanded for three days. *—PTI*

CLUES FROM A LOST KINGDOM

Archaeologists have uncovered the grave of a Kerma-period ruler in Sudan's Bayuda Desert, offering rare insights into the burial practices of the 4,000-year-old kingdom. The Kerma period refers to the Bronze Age civilisation that thrived in Nubia (modern-day Sudan) from around 2500 to 1500 BC, a powerful monarchy whose capital, Kerma, rivalled ancient Egypt politically and economically. The discovery, published in 'Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa', features signs of fire-related rituals and pottery fragments that may have been deliberately smashed. Found in the volcanic and historically significant Bayuda region, between the Nile's fourth and sixth cataracts, the grave provides fresh clues to Kerma's political hierarchy, cultural identity and long-standing independence from Egypt

PHOTO: A PUDŁO IN BADURA

Reverse migration adds fuel to 'infiltration row' fire in WB

A steady trickle of undocumented Bangladeshi immigrants returning home through the Hakimpur border in West Bengal has spiralled into a full-blown political flashpoint, sharpening BJP-TMC hostilities over infiltration, voter roll integrity and the Election Commission's high-stakes Special Intensive Revision (SIR) months before the 2026 Assembly polls.

What began as a quiet, barely noticed return of immigrants has morphed into high-impact political spectacle. Hakimpur, a small border outpost, has abruptly become the stage on which both parties project competing narratives, where optics matter more than the modest numbers involved.

Since early November, locals and security personnel in Bongaon, North 24 Parganas, say they have seen a surge of undocumented Bangladeshis attempting to walk back across the border after the SIR process began. Border Security Force officials estimate 150–200 people have been returning daily, with around 1,700 crossing back by 20 November.

Since early November, locals and security personnel in Bongaon, North 24 Parganas, say they have seen a surge of undocumented Bangladeshis attempting to walk back across the border after the SIR process began ***PHOTO: PTI***

BJP claims vindication

For the BJP, images of men, women and children clutching small bags as they move towards the zero line offer powerful proof of what the party has long alleged: that large-scale illegal immigration has altered West Bengal's electoral balance.

"This is exactly what we have been saying. The SIR has rattled infiltrators. The truth is finally coming out," BJP state president Samik Bhattacharya said. The party argues that even small-scale reverse movement validates its claims. BJP spokesperson Keya Ghosh said the ongoing departures "strengthen our narrative beyond doubt", adding, "Even 5,000 deletions prove our point."

Faced with questions about the vast gap between the BJP's earlier claims of "50 lakh to one crore infiltrators" and the current movement that does not touch even 10,000, Ghosh said many who arrived earlier had long since secured voter cards and other documents. "TMC leaders helped them regularise documents over the years," she alleged.

A BJP district leader in Bongaon said the visuals have become a "potent tool" to galvanise the cadre and consolidate voters in border districts, with video clips circulating widely in WhatsApp groups and IT-cell messaging.

TMC alleges staged optics

The Trinamool Congress, however, insists the entire spectacle is manufactured. A senior TMC MP described the Hakimpur scenes as "staged optics designed to build a narrative before 2026 and justify SIR", arguing that nothing about the movement was organic.

TMC spokesperson Krishanu Mitra accused the BJP and central agencies of political collusion. "Were these infiltrators waiting at no-man's land for the BSF to open the gates and give journalists daily confessions?" he asked. He questioned why no arrests had been made if the migrants were genuinely illegal. "If they are infiltrators, why no crackdown on touts?" he said.

According to local TMC leaders in Basirhat, most of those leaving are poor workers—brick kiln labourers, masons, domestic workers—who panicked at the prospect of door-to-door verification under the SIR, especially those who had lived for years using fake Aadhaar cards or forged voter IDs.

The party argues the episode is designed to "prove" the credibility of the SIR and bolster the BJP's infiltration narrative ahead of the 2026 elections.

Experts urge perspective

Political scientist Biswanath Chakraborty said the recent movements confirm that infiltration is a reality in West Bengal but warned against overstated political conclusions. "Infiltrators exist; infiltration happens. But four to five thousand people going back does not justify wild claims of 50 lakh or 1 crore deletions," he said.

He argued that while the episode has drawn renewed attention to the issue in the context of the SIR, the broader rhetoric remains disconnected from hard numbers. "SIR in West Bengal will be a paperwork exercise rather than a meaningful deletion drive, the way the BJP imagines. Some dead or ineligible names may go, but it will not impact electoral politics in any real sense."

Political analyst Suman Bhattacharya added that the optics could backfire on the BJP, especially amid rising public anger over deaths allegedly linked to the SIR process. "This is purely political optics. It will not help the BJP in any final run. If you want to identify 2,500 infiltrators, how do you justify 50 or more deaths of your own citizens, including BLOs who were doing their duty?" he asked.

The TMC has claimed that 41 people, including Booth Level Officers, have died—some by suicide—since the SIR began. The BJP has rejected the allegation as "baseless and politically motivated".

Optics that extend far beyond Hakimpur

In West Bengal's high-voltage electoral landscape, where imagery often outruns facts, each returning immigrant has become a contested symbol. For the BJP, they represent vindication; for the TMC, evidence of "manufactured panic". Each frame, rapidly shared online, shapes perceptions well beyond the border belt.

With the 2026 Assembly polls approaching, the trickle of returning immigrants and the political battles now raging over them may influence the election discourse as profoundly as the SIR itself. *—PTI*

SALAR

Honduran's poll in turmoil after Don pardons ex-prez

On the eve of Honduras' presidential election, the national conversation abruptly shifted from domestic concerns to Washington, after US President Donald Trump both endorsed a candidate and pardoned one of the country's most divisive political figures.

Trump plunged into Honduran politics this week with two bombshell moves: publicly backing Nasry "Tito" Asfura, the conservative National Party's presidential candidate, and announcing a pardon for former president Juan Orlando Hernández, who had been sentenced in the United States to 45 years in prison for aiding the movement of tons of cocaine. Both men belong to the same party.

Trump's influence

Until Trump's high-profile intervention, concerns around Sunday's vote largely centred on the three leading candidates undermining the credibility of the electoral process. All had warned of manipulation and signalled they would not accept preliminary results that did not favour them.

By Saturday, voters and analysts alike were trying to assess who might gain from Trump's unexpectedly forceful entrance and what his intended political message might be.

Trump's endorsement of Asfura appeared straightforward — one conservative supporting another — but the addition of Hernández, whose trial in New York was covered extensively and daily by Honduran media, introduced an unpredictable new element. The move risked reminding voters of corruption scandals that have long plagued the National Party, even as it energised the party's core supporters.

Trump also dismissed the other two main contenders, Rixi Moncada of the governing social democrat Libre Party and Salvador Nasralla of the Liberal Party, calling Nasralla a "borderline Communist".

A wild card in the final hours

Moncada, a former finance and defence secretary in President Xiomara Castro's administration, seized on Trump's intervention to rally supporters. Before she took the stage at a campaign event, a large screen looped footage of Hernández's arrest.

She framed the pardon as a desperate attempt by entrenched economic elites and organised crime interests to block her path to the presidency. Moncada said these groups had tolerated Hernández's arrest once he left office because he was no longer useful to them — but, facing the prospect of losing power, they had now appealed to Washington for help.

Describing Hernández as "the biggest capo in the history of Honduras", she argued that his return amounted to a new offence. "What has happened yesterday is a new crime," she told supporters to loud cheers. "And that new crime we will judge tomorrow at the ballot box. They won't come back." Nasralla, meanwhile, sought to reinforce his outsider image despite this being his fourth presidential run. At a rally on Friday night, he declared: "I don't answer to dark pacts, or corrupt networks, or criminals who have killed our people."

Views from the street

In Tegucigalpa, Trump's interventions dominated conversation. At a busy intersection in an affluent neighbourhood, fruit vendor Adalid Ávila sold oranges, bananas and rambutans from the back of a pickup truck. Nearby, a banner displayed an image of Hernández being handed over to US authorities in 2022 and reminded passersby of allegations that he had diverted social security funds.

Ávila, however, believed Trump's move would not significantly alter voter decisions. Many Hondurans still spoke favourably of Hernández, he said. He planned to vote for Asfura, recalling the tunnels and bridges built during his tenure as mayor that had helped ease the capital's traffic congestion. "He's hardworking, he inspires you," Ávila said. Trump's endorsement, he believed, could help Asfura because Hondurans understood how influential US support could be. But he worried about post-election tensions. "People aren't tolerant in this country," he said. "There's always revolution, because no one likes to lose."

Across town, 30-year-old nurse Melany Martínez queued for a baleada, a staple of beans, cheese and cream wrapped in a warm tortilla. She viewed Trump's backing of Asfura as an "alert" and questioned the US president's motives. Pardoning Hernández, convicted of a serious crime, seemed deeply wrong to her. She hoped for a peaceful vote but had heard talk of unrest and suggestions to stock up on essentials. As a health worker, she wanted the next government to prioritise education and healthcare — areas long neglected in Honduras.

Limited electoral impact?

Despite the political uproar, Oliver Eraso, a law professor at the National Autonomous University of Honduras, doubted Trump's actions would drastically alter voting patterns. "The social and collective behaviour of the electorate was already defined a week or two ago," he said, particularly among supporters of the National and Liberal parties.

Nonetheless, with Honduras poised for a tightly contested election and three candidates questioning the process, Trump's late-stage intervention added a volatile new layer to an already fraught political landscape. *—PTI*

Honduras' former president Juan Orlando Hernandez with US President Trump at the 2019 signing of an immigration agreement, in New York ***PHOTO: PRESIDENCY HONDURAS/HANDOUT***

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Himalayan snow drought threatens water security for millions

The vast snowfields that feed Asia's great rivers, from the Indus to the Mekong, are shrinking faster than ever.

Researchers at the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) Jammu and IIT Mandi reveal in a new study1 that snow droughts, periods of abnormally low accumulation, are now recurring with alarming frequency across the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH), threatening the water security of nearly two billion people downstream.

"We found moderate to severe snow droughts occurring in the region as recently as 2015 and 2016, with particularly strong signals in Afghanistan and northern India," said Hemant Singh, a research scholar at the Department of Civil Engineering at IIT Jammu. These droughts, Singh added, are closely tied to reducing snow cover days and rapid snowmelt, a clear indicator of warming in the mid and high-altitude Himalaya.

The study analysed satellite and reanalysis datasets between 1999 and 2016 to develop metrics such as the snow water equivalent index (SWEI) and the number of snow cover days (SCD) at a 500-metre spatial scale — the most detailed mapping of Himalayan snow droughts yet.

It found that basins in Afghanistan, such as Amu-Darya, northwest and the upper Indus, experienced the highest frequencies, with up to 25 snow drought events recorded in the northwest basin alone. Even in traditionally heavy snow areas, such as the Ganga and Brahmaputra basins, the average number of snow-covered days has declined by up to 15 days over two decades.

"Seasonal snow in these basins acts as a natural reservoir," said Divyesh Varade, an assistant professor at IIT Jammu. When that reservoir shrinks, he said, it ripples into changes in agriculture, hydropower generation and the timing and volume of river flows — impacts already being felt in communities that rely on spring meltwater for irrigation and domestic use.

The Hindu Kush Himalaya is warming faster than the global average, with temperatures rising by 0.74°C ***PHOTO: WIKI COMMONS***

A WARMING MOUNTAIN CORE

The Hindu Kush Himalaya is warming faster than the global average, with temperatures rising by 0.74°C more than elsewhere, according to recent estimates. Singh's team found that snow droughts are most pronounced between 3,000 and 6,000 metres, where elevation-dependent warming accelerates snow loss.

"This elevation band is critical," explained Vivek Gupta, an assistant professor at IIT Mandi. "It's where much of the snowpack forms and persists. Once that zone starts to experience more rain than snow, we're essentially changing the mountain hydrology." More precipitation is now falling as rain rather than snow, accelerating runoff and depleting seasonal snow storage.

THE RISK

"Glacier retreat is a slow leak," said Qianggong Zhang, Head of Climate and Environmental Risks at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Kathmandu. "Snow drought can be like a sudden shut-off valve."

Zhang noted that farmers in the western Himalaya rely on late-spring meltwater just as crops begin to grow. Missing even a week of snow can reduce peak irrigation supply and heighten stress on yields, especially when combined with heat or extreme weather.

Sher Muhammad, a cryosphere specialist at ICIMOD, said the dependence on seasonal snow is even greater than many policymakers realise. "In the Indus basin, snowmelt generates roughly 40% of the runoff — around seven times more than glaciers," he said. "The Helmand basin sees over 70% of its runoff from snowmelt."

HOTSPOTS OF CONCERN

The study identifies several basins where snow droughts are intensifying: the Amu Darya, Indus, Mekong and Salween, among others. In the upper Indus, snow cover days declined by roughly 12 between 2002 and 2018, with similar reductions seen in Afghanistan's highlands.

"This work records data up to 2018, but our updated Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) analysis shows snow-cover days have continued to hit record lows across the HKH in recent years; recurrent failure is now an evident trend," Zhang said. Researchers attribute the changes to warming temperatures and declining winter precipitation, magnified by climate oscillations such as El Niño.

ADAPTATION

Singh and his colleagues argue that policymakers need to move beyond a glacier-centric approach toward one that recognises the full mountain water cycle.

"We need to treat snow as a strategic water asset," Singh said. "That means mapping it, conserving it, and managing meltwater efficiently." Zhang said hydropower operators and irrigation planners should be able to use snow information the same way they use weather or flood forecasts, as part of operational decision support.

Muhammad stressed that adaptation must extend across the entire cryosphere. "Glaciers represent only a part of the broader context," he said. "Within the HKH, adaptation strategies must integrate the entire cryosphere-water system, including glaciers, seasonal snow, permafrost, springs and groundwater."

He added that thawing permafrost and drying springs are already damaging mountain roads and canals, threatening water infrastructure and putting local water security at risk.

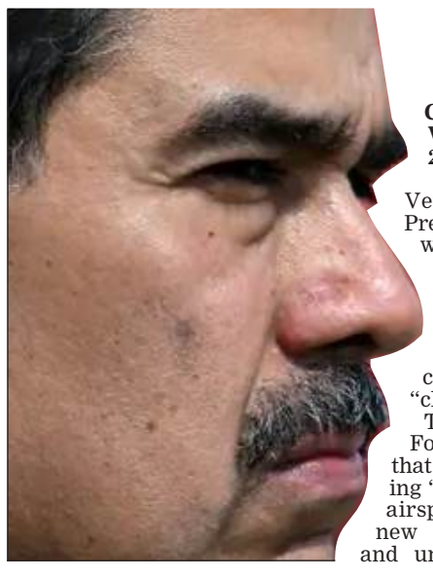
VANISHING RESERVOIR

If warming continues, the HKH's role as Asia's frozen reservoir could drastically diminish in coming decades. Models suggest shorter snow residence times and a higher share of precipitation falling as rain rather than snow, particularly at mid elevations.

Zhang said that continued warming will shorten snow cover and increase the likelihood of snow droughts, which could become nearly annual in some basins, though precise timelines require more modelling. For now, the mountains still gleam white each winter — but for shorter and shorter spells. As Gupta said, "Every missing day of snow is a day less of stored water." *—The Nature*

Venezuela fumes at Trump's 'colonialism'

Trump said the Venezuelan airspace was 'closed'



CARACAS/ WASHINGTON, 29 NOV

Venezuela said US President Donald Trump was making "colonialist threats" after the Republican wrote on social media that the airspace around the South American country should be "closed in its entirety".

The Venezuelan Foreign Ministry said that Trump was threatening "the sovereignty of its airspace, constituting a new extravagant, illegal, and unjustified aggression against the people of Venezuela."

The government appealed to international organisations including the UN to condemn Trump's act, noting that the US doesn't have the authority to close another country's airspace.

Notably, the White House has not respond to questions about what Trump posted on his Truth Social, and it was unclear whether he was announcing a new policy or simply reinforcing the messaging around his campaign against Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, which has involved multiple strikes in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean on small boats accused of ferrying drugs as well as a buildup of naval forces in the region. More than 80 people have been killed in such strikes since early September.

Trump had called for an aerial blockade to "Airlines, Pilots, Drug Dealers, and Human Traffickers". International airlines last week began to cancel flights to Venezuela after the Federal Aviation Administration told pilots to be cautious flying around the country because of heightened military activity.

The FAA's jurisdiction is generally limited to the US and its territories. The agency does routinely warn pilots about the dangers of flying over areas with ongoing conflicts or military activity around the globe, as it did earlier this month with Venezuela.

However, the US has deployed its largest aircraft carrier to the region, with Trump recently indicating that action "by land" would soon commence. He has also said that the CIA has been operating in Venezuela.

—Agencies

ICE detainer issued on Afghan terror threat suspect

WASHINGTON, 30 NOV

US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has issued a detainer against Afghan national Mohammad Dawood Alokozay, who has been charged in Texas with making a terrorist threat. An ICE detainer is a formal request asking law enforcement to inform the agency before releasing a "removable alien", allowing controlled transfer into ICE custody. According to DHS Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin, Alokozay posted a TikTok video allegedly showing himself constructing a bomb and intending to target a building in the Fort Worth area. He was arrested on Tuesday by the Texas Department of Public Safety and an FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force. The DHS said it has halted immigration requests relating to Afghan nationals. ***—ANI***

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Kyrgyzstan votes in snap polls amid Oppn crackdown

BISHKEK, 30 NOV

Polls opened in Kyrgyzstan on Sunday for a snap parliamentary election, held against a backdrop of arrests of opposition figures and the closure of independent media outlets. The vote is expected to further entrench President Sadyr Zhaparov's power, amid accusations that he is suppressing dissent in what was once considered Central Asia's most democratic country. The election has been brought forward by a year, with officials claiming that the original schedule would have clashed with the 2027 presidential elections. Kyrgyzstan has also introduced sweeping electoral reforms, with 30 constituencies each electing three lawmakers. The country is reliant on Moscow and hosts a Russian air base. ***—PTI***

Pak dismisses UN's remarks on 27th Amendment

ISLAMABAD, 30 NOV

Pakistan on Sunday rejected UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk's concerns over the 27th Constitutional Amendment, calling them "ungrounded and misplaced". Türk, in a statement from Geneva, said the amendment—like the 26th last year—was adopted without meaningful consultation with legal experts or civil society. He warned the "hastily adopted" changes could undermine judicial independence and raise questions over military accountability. Pakistan's Foreign Office said that Constitutional amendments are the exclusive domain of elected representatives. The Amendment seeks to create a Chief of Defense Forces, establish a Federal Constitutional Court, and curb Supreme Court. ***—PTI***

Sudanese govt tells UN it's open to aid

CAIRO, 30 NOV

The Sudanese government has affirmed its readiness to open the humanitarian passages and secure the access of the humanitarian aid, state media reported. The statement came after Prime Minister Kamil Idris met Ramtane Lamamra, the Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General in Sudan on Sunday. The state-run Sudan News Agency (SUNA) reported that Idriss stressed the government's determination to cooperate with international organisations based on a government-prepared roadmap. The government statement said that Idriss pushed for opening the humanitarian tracks to areas where humanitarian aid had not reached before. Sudan is currently facing one of the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with famine declared in several parts of the country. ***—Agencies***

4 DIE, 10 HURT IN SHOOTING AT KIDS' PARTY IN CALIFORNIA

STOCKTON, 30 NOV

Four people were killed and 10 wounded in a shooting during a family gathering at a banquet hall in Stockton, sheriff's officials said Saturday.

The victims included both children and adults, said Heather Brent, a spokesperson for the San Joaquin County sheriff's office. Early indications "suggest this may have been a targeted incident," Brent said.

Local officials said the suspected shooter has not been caught and pleaded with the public for help. Detectives were still working to identify a possible motive.

"If you have any information about this individual, reach out immediately. If you are this individual, turn yourself in immediately," San Joaquin County District Attorney Ron Freitas said during a news conference.

The shooting occurred just before 6 pm inside the banquet hall. Stockton is a city of 3,20,000 people. *—PTI*

First responders walk through a parking lot near the scene of a mass shooting Saturday, in Stockton, California ***PHOTO: PTI***

UKRAINIAN DELEGATION TO DISCUSS PEACE DEAL IN US

WEST PALM BEACH, 30 NOV

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of President Donald Trump, were set to discuss the peace plan with Ukrainian delegation on Sunday. This will set the stage for talks this week in Moscow with Russian President Vladimir Putin

On Friday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced the resignation of his chief of staff, Andrii Yermak, who had been the country's lead negotiator. over a USD 100 million embezzled scam.

Kyiv's new delegation will hash out the 28-point plan, which impose limits on the size of Ukraine's military, block the country from joining NATO, and requires it to cede a territory to Russia.

Zelenskyy said that the Ukrainian delegation would seek to "bring the war to a dignified end." *—PTI*

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio (centre) recently met a Ukranian delegation in Switzerland over peace plan ***PHOTO: X***

Landslide survivors cross a section of a road that is blocked by debris in Hanguranketha, Sri Lanka, on Saturday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Cyclone Ditwah kills 330 in Lanka

COLOMBO/ MEDAN, 30 NOV

Indian Air Force and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel continued to assist Sri Lankan authorities in rescue and relief efforts on Sunday in the aftermath of the devastation caused by Cyclone Ditwah that killed over 330 people.

According to the latest figures released by Sri Lanka's Disaster Management Centre(DMC) at 6pm on Sunday, 334 people have been killed, with 370 missing in catastrophic floods and landslides caused by Ditwah and extreme weather conditions since 16 November.

A whopping 11,18,929 people from 3,09,607 families were affected by the extreme weather, DMC said.

The NDRF team carried out rescue operations in Kochikade, Colombo.

Colombo District Secretary Prasanna Ginige said the alerts were issued due to River Kelani rising to dangerous levels. Kelani River continues to be inundated with the flow from upper central hill areas where the devastation from Cyclone Ditwah was severe.

Athula Karunanayake, Director General of the Meteorological Department, said that at 8am, Ditwah was spotted entering the Tamil Nadu coast 150km away from Sri Lanka's northern Jaffna. Sri Lanka would only see light showers at certain locations, he said.

Meanwhile, India's National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel, along with the Indian Air Force, continue to assist Sri Lankan authorities to save precious lives on a war footing.

The US and the Maldives will also leave for Sri Lanka and assist medical needs.

Meanwhile, some residents of the flood-hit island of Indonesia's Sumatra resorted to looting, seeking food and water to survive.

The floods, which hit nearly a week ago, have killed 303 people — with the number expected to rise — and displaced thousands. *—PTI*

Philippines protests graft allegation amid flood devastation

MANILA, 30 NOV

Thousands of Filipinos, including Roman Catholic clergy, staged protests on Sunday demanding swift prosecution of senior legislators and officials accused in a massive flood-control corruption scandal. Left-wing groups at Manila's main park also called for the immediate resignation of all implicated officials.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr has been struggling to contain public anger over substandard or non-existent flood-control projects blamed on widespread graft. Over 17,000 police personnel were deployed across Metro Manila, with key roads around the Malacanang Palace sealed off.

Calls for the military to withdraw support from the administration have surfaced, but the Armed Forces dismissed them. At least 88 retired generals, including three former chiefs of staff, issued a joint statement rejecting any unconstitutional moves, reaffirming the military's commitment to stability.

Church-led rallies nationwide culminated at the EDSA People Power monument, where around 5,000 protesters demanded jail terms and asset recovery from lawmakers and contractors involved. Marcos said about 12 billion pesos in assets have already been frozen. *—PTI*

Thousands of Filipinos took to the streets, demanding that officials were jailed over allegations that they embezzled flood relief funds ***PHOTO: X***

Netanyahu seeks pardon in graft trial

ISLAMABAD, 30 NOV

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday asked the country's President to grant him a pardon from corruption charges — seeking to end a long-running trial that has bitterly divided the nation.

Netanyahu, who has been at war against the country's legal system over the charges, said the request would help unify the country at a time of momentous changes in the region. But it immediately triggered denunciations from his opponents, who said it would weaken Israel's democratic institutions and send a dangerous message that he is above the rule of law.

Netanyahu is the only sitting Prime Minister in Israeli history to stand trial, after being charged with fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three separate cases, accusing him of exchanging favours with wealthy political supporters. He has not yet been convicted.

The request comes after US President Donald Trump sent a letter to President Isaac Herzog calling the corruption case "political, unjustified prosecution." *—PTI*

Ex-army officers protest in Argentina

BUENOS AIRES, 30 NOV

Former military officers who served under Argentina's dictatorship and their families staged a rally on Saturday, demanding the release of fellow officers imprisoned for human rights abuses committed during the junta's 1976-1983 rule.

Saturday's demonstration was seen as a provocation in the country of Nunca Más, the slogan that represents Argentina's commitment to "never again" return to authoritarianism.

The former officers gathered at Plaza de Mayo, the historic site of protests by women searching for children who had been abducted and made to "disappear" by the junta.

The groups, who served in the Army during Argentina's dictatorship, demanded that their fellow officers who were imprisoned for rights abuses be released ***PHOTO: X***

Circling the plaza in silent protest every Thursday for decades, the women became known as the 'Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo.'

For the critics, including dozens of counter-protesters, the rally was a sign that consensus about the violent dictatorship is changing.

Right-wing President Javier Milei has justified the dictatorship's terrorism as a war against leftist guerrillas.*—PTI*

IN MILITARY AND DEFENCE TEAMS

Should women do nat'l service? Swedes vote

GENEVA, 30 NOV

Swiss voters are voting to decide whether women, like men, must do national service in the military and civil defence teams.

Supporters of the "citizen service initiative" in the referendum ending Sunday hope it will boost social cohesion by adding jobs in areas like environmental protection, food security and elderly care.

Parliament overwhelmingly opposes the idea, mainly for cost reasons and out of concern that it could damage the economy by taking tens of thousands of people out of the workforce.

While initial polls suggested a tight contest, a recent survey showed the initiative would fail.

"Clouds are gathering in the skies of Switzerland. On one hand, there are landslides in the mountains, floods, risks of energy shortages and war. On the other hand, individualism is growing, and loneliness increasing," the campaigners said.

"By proposing a national service for all young people, the initiative responds to exactly what we need: that everybody takes responsibility to work for a stronger Switzerland," they added.

The government countered that the army and civil defence have enough staff, and no more people should be recruited.

Young men in Switzerland are already required to carry out military service or join civil protection teams.

Conscientious objectors can do other types of service, and those who opt out entirely must pay an exemption fee. *—PTI*

Young men in Switzerland are already required to carry out military service or join civil protection teams ***PHOTO: X***

Burned buildings stand in the aftermath of a fire at Wang Fuk Court, a residential estate in the Tai Po district of Hong Kong ***PHOTO: PTI***

Hong Kong inferno toll rises to 146

BEIJING/HONG KONG, 30 NOV

The death toll in the fire at seven high-rise residential buildings in Hong Kong has risen to 146 on Sunday, while the fate of 150 people is still unclear as search continued on the fifth day.

Eight people, including a woman connected with the renovation of the buildings that caught fire on Wednesday, were arrested by Hong Kong's anti-corruption body for allegedly using inflammable, substandard materials.

The status of 150 people is unclear, South China Morning Post reported.

Survivors complained that fire alarms in the buildings did not work and as a result people had no warning. China has launched a nationwide inspection of fire hazards in high-rise buildings. *—PTI*

2 dozen firms to launch ₹40,000 crore IPO by Jan

Firms such as ICICI, Meesho & Juniper Energy eye IPO debut

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

The IPO momentum shows no signs of slowing, with another two dozen companies, including ICICI Prudential AMC, Meesho and Juniper Green Energy, preparing to launch their public issues that could collectively raise nearly Rs 40,000 crore over the next two months, merchant bankers said.

Adding to this robust pipeline are prominent names such as artificial intelligence firm Fractal Analytics, home and sleep solutions brand Wakefit Innovations, technology-led security and surveillance firm Innovatiview India, and hospital chain Park Medi World, they added.

This exceptional pipeline not only reflected the confidence of issuers but also highlighted investors' appetite to seize listing-day gains or back companies with strong long-term growth potential.

Moreover, companies across the spectrum -- large, mid- and small-caps -- are gearing up to tap the IPO route in the coming weeks.

Companies across the spectrum are gearing up to tap the IPO route in the coming weeks **PHOTO: FREEPIK**

Experts attribute this momentum to rising retail participation and resilient domestic inflows, which have been instrumental in sustaining the fundraising surge.

So far this year, 96 companies have debuted on the stock exchanges, raising Rs 1.6 lakh crore.

More than 40 of these listings occurred in the last three months alone, highlighting the heightened activity in the primary market.

Meanwhile, SoftBank-backed Meesho is planning to raise Rs 5,421 crore through an issue opening on 3 December. The IPO comprises a fresh issue worth Rs 4,250 crore and an OFS of 10.55 crore shares valued at Rs 1,171 crore at the upper band. At the same time, Precision component maker Aequs' Rs 922 crore and Vidya Wires' Rs 300 crore public offering would be available for subscription.

Other sizeable offerings planned for December included -- Clean Max Enviro Energy Solutions (Rs 5,200 crore), Fractal Analytics (Rs 4,900 crore) and Juniper Green Energy (Rs 3,000 crore).

Also preparing for the market between December and January are-- Manipal Payment, Kanodia Cement, Corona Remedies, Milky Mist, Amagi Media Labs, Nephrocare Health Services, Veeda Clinical, LCC Projects, Waterways Leisure, KSH International, Skyways Air Services, Ardee Engineering, PNGS Reva Diamond, and CIEL HR Services. *—PTI*

Wakefit to float IPO on 8 Dec to raise Rs 1,400 cr

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

Home and furnishings company Wakefit Innovations Ltd is gearing up to launch its initial public offering (IPO) on 8 December, to raise around Rs 1,400 crore. The company's maiden public offering is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares aggregating up to Rs 377.1 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of 4.67 crore shares by the selling shareholders, according to the red herring prospectus (RHP). Market sources said that the total issue size would be around Rs 1,400 crore. The IPO of the Bengaluru-based company will conclude on 10 December, and anchor investors will be allocated shares on 5 December, the RHP noted. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

UPI in India registers steady YoY growth in Nov

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

UPI continued rapid rise in November, crossing over 19 billion transactions worth Rs 24.58 lakh crore, according to the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). The same period last year, UPI recorded 23 per cent growth in transaction volume and nearly 14 per cent growth in value from November 2024., Compared to November 2023, the growth looks even stronger, with UPI transactions increasing by nearly 70 per cent in volume and over 41 per cent in value in just two years. NPCI data also shows a consistent surge over the past five years. The steady year-on-year (YoY) rise highlights how digital payments have become deeply embedded in everyday life, underlining India's rapid shift from cash to digital modes of payment. *—ANI*

NSE, BSE impose ₹5.42 lakh penalty on MTNL

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

Stock exchanges NSE and BSE have imposed penalty of Rs 5.42 lakh on state-owned debt-ridden telecom firm MTNL for not complying with the norms related to board composition. MTNL, in a regulatory filing, said it is required to appoint four more independent directors as per the norm, but it has been unable to do so, according to a letter to MTNL from NSE. The penal amount comprises basic fines amounting to Rs 4.6 lakh and a GST at the rate of 18 per cent amounting to Rs 82,800. MTNL said DoT appoints all board directors, with two independent directors already named on 15 April, 2025, and four more sought. The company is also requesting NSE and BSE to waive fines. *—PTI*

SBI expects double-digit growth by FY26

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

State Bank of India (SBI) anticipates a significant surge in corporate loan demand, projecting double-digit growth in the remaining two quarters of the financial year. Chairman C S Setty highlighted the bank's robust pipeline, with approximately Rs 7 lakh crore in loan sanctions, including both unutilised working capital limits and term loans currently under disbursement. Setty noted that corporate credit, which had been stagnant, recorded a revival with a 7.1 per cent growth in Q2. "Our guidance on the corporate credit would be the lower double digit in the two quarters with the available pipeline," he stated. He added that SBI aims to maintain a capital adequacy ratio of 15 per cent over the next 5-6 years without necessitating further equity capital. *—PTI*

RELIANCE & BAJAJ LEAD

Mcap of 7 firms climbs by ₹96,201 cr

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

PHOTO: PTI

The combined market valuation of seven of the top ten most valued firms surged by Rs 96,200.95 crore last week, driven by strong performances from Reliance Industries and Bajaj Finance amid positive trends in the equity market.

The BSE benchmark index experienced an uptick of 474.75 points or 0.55 per cent, with the Sensex reaching a record high of 86,055.86 on Thursday.

Among the top ten firms, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, and Hindustan Unilever reported gains, while Bharti Airtel, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) faced declines in their valuations.

Reliance Industries saw its market capitalisation increase by Rs 28,282.86 crore, bringing its total to Rs 21,20,335.47 crore. Bajaj Finance's valuation rose by Rs 20,347.52 crore, elevating it to Rs 6,45,676.11 crore. HDFC Bank's market value grew by Rs 13,611.11 crore to reach Rs 15,48,743.67 crore, while ICICI Bank's surged by Rs 13,599.62 crore to Rs 9,92,725.97 crore. Additionally, Hindustan Unilever's market cap increased by Rs 7,671.41 crore to Rs 5,79,644.16 crore, and State Bank of India gained Rs 6,415.28 crore, reaching Rs 9,04,185.15 crore.

However, Bharti Airtel's market valuation dropped by Rs 35,239.01 crore to Rs 11,98,040.84 crore, with LIC's down by Rs 4,996.75 crore to Rs 5,65,581.29 crore, and TCS declining by Rs 3,762.81 crore to Rs 11,35,952.85 crore. In the ranking, Reliance Industries continues to lead, followed by HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, TCS, ICICI Bank, SBI, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever, and LIC. *—PTI*

FPIs resume selling in Nov; withdraw Rs 3,765 crore

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

After a pause in October, foreign investors resumed selling, withdrawing Rs 3,765 crore from Indian equities in November, driven by global risk-off sentiment, volatility in global tech stocks and preference for primary markets over secondary markets.

This dip in November came after a net inflow of Rs 14,610 crore in October, an uptick that had broken a three-month streak of withdrawals, Rs 23,885 crore in September, Rs 34,990 crore in August, and Rs 17,700 crore in July.

A combination of global and domestic factors shaped the flow trend in November.

On the global front, uncertainty around the US Federal Reserve's rate-cut trajectory, a firm US dollar, and a weak risk appetite kept foreign investors cautious. Geopolitical tensions and volatile crude prices reinforced the risk-off tone, said Himanshu Srivastava, Principal Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India. Domestically, this cautiousness was compounded by stretched valuations and subdued industrial indicators, which tempered investor response, he added.

Vaqarjaved Khan, Senior Fundamental Analyst at Angel One, noted that the outflows in November were primarily driven by global risk aversion and volatility in tech stocks. However, not all indicators point toward a bearish trend.

VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments, believes there is still no clear evidence of a trend reversal in FPI flows.

The recent rally, with both Nifty and Sensex hitting new records on 27 November after a 14-month wait, along with improved Q2 corporate earnings and expectations of growth in Q3 and Q4, has lifted market sentiment, he added. *—PTI*

RBI's interest rate, global trends to drive markets: Analysts

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

Analysts suggest upcoming stock market movements will significantly hinge on macroeconomic data, global trends, the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) interest rate decision, and foreign investor trading activities.

The week begins with India's industrial production data for October, being released on 1 December, followed by November automobile sales data on Monday. Ajit Mishra, Senior Vice President of Research at Religare Broking Ltd, stated, "This week features a heavy data calendar that could influence volatility...the RBI's monetary policy on 5 December will be closely tracked."

Pravesh Gour, a Senior Technical Analyst at Swastika Investmart Ltd, added that the RBI's decision will serve as a crucial market trigger, alongside the November auto sales figures, which will provide insights on festive-season demand. After a robust week where the BSE benchmark rose by 0.55 per cent, the attention now shifts to upcoming domestic and global indicators, which might sustain the recent market momentum. *—PTI*

RETAIL INFLATION BELOW 2%

RBI may cut interest rate by 25 bps on 5 Dec

MUMBAI, 30 NOV

The RBI may trim the benchmark lending rate by 25 bps in its forthcoming monetary policy meeting, as inflationary pressures have subdued, although some experts believe the RBI is likely to keep the rate unchanged in the backdrop of better-than-expected GDP growth of 8.2 per cent in the second quarter.

The consumer price index (CPI) based retail inflation is ruling below the 2 per cent lower band mandated by the government for the last two months.

Some experts, however, believe that the RBI may continue with the pause on interest rates as growth has picked up, sustained by fiscal consolidation, targeted public investment, and various reforms like the GST rate cut.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting is scheduled from 3-5 December, 2025.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra is scheduled to announce the decision of the rate-setting panel on 5 December.

RBI has cumulatively reduced the repo rate by 100 basis points in successive policy announcements to 5.5 per cent, before hitting the pause button in August. *—PTI*

Dalmia Cement gets ₹266.3 cr tax notices

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Ltd (DCBL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Dalmia Bharat, has received two show cause notices totalling Rs 266.3 crore from the Sales Tax Office.

The notices were "issued under Section 74 of the Central GST/Tamil Nadu GST Act 2017 for AY 2019-20 and AY 2022-23, the concerned Sales Tax Officer, Lalgudi, Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu," according to a regulatory filing from Dalmia Bharat.

For Assessment Year 2019-20, the authorities demanded a tax of Rs 128.39 crore along with a penalty of Rs 19.25 crore.

For 2022-23, the show-cause notice has demanded a tax of Rs 59.32 crore, along with a penalty of the same amount.

This pertains to some differences observed in taxable turnover and amount of ITC (input tax credit) for the assessment years 2019-20 and 2022-23, it said.

Founded in 1939, Dalmia Bharat is the fourth-largest cement manufacturer in India, with an installed capacity of 49.5 million tonnes per annum (MTPA). *—PTI*

2 bills to replace GST compensation cess in LS on 1 Dec

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

The government is likely to introduce two bills in the Lok Sabha to replace GST compensation cess with another levy, to ensure that the tax incidence remains the same on tobacco, pan masala and other sin goods after discontinuation of the cess.

The Central Excise Amendment Bill, 2025, and The Health Security se National Security Cess Bill, 2025, are listed for introduction on Monday by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

According to sources, the Central Excise Amendment Bill, 2025, will replace GST compensation cess on tobacco by levying excise duty on tobacco products like cigarettes.

The 'Health Security se National Security Cess Bill, 2025', will replace the compensation cess on pan masala.

It seeks to "augment the resources for meeting Security expenditure on national security and for public health, and levy a cess for the said purposes on the machines installed or other processes undertaken by which specified goods are manufactured or produced". *—PTI*

Gold could retest record highs: Analyst

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

Gold prices are poised to remain firm and could edge closer to record highs next week as investors await key US data, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell's speech and the Reserve Bank of India's policy decision, analysts said.

"Gold moves out of the consolidation range as investors focus on the manufacturing and services PMI data from across regions, US jobs data, and consumer sentiments," Pranav Mer, Vice President, EBG - Commodity & Currency Research, JM Financial Services Ltd, said.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures for the February 2026 contract climbed by Rs 3,654, or 2.9 per cent, over the past week to close at Rs 1,29,504 per 10 grams on Friday.

Meanwhile, silver posted a spectacular week outperforming gold. *—PTI*

NCLAT upholds NCLT ruling, rejects Voltas insolvency plea

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has rejected an insolvency petition against Tata Group firm Voltas, brought forth by operational creditor Air Wave Technocrafts. The NCLAT upheld the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), which previously dismissed the application on 27 May, 2025, citing a "pre-existing dispute."

The NCLAT stated, "We see no reason to take a different view in the matter from that of the Adjudicating Authority (NCLT) in rejecting the Section 9 application on valid grounds of pre-existing disputes." They affirmed that an email chain between Air Wave Technocrafts and Voltas showed ongoing disputes regarding work certification and payment amounts.

Air Wave, responsible for maintaining HVAC systems for Voltas's clients, raised invoices supported by necessary documentation. The creditor claimed a total debt of Rs 1.20 crore and issued a demand notice on 17 February, 2024. However, Voltas disputed the liability and alleged issues of limitation, leading to the dismissal of the insolvency plea, a decision now upheld by the NCLAT. *—PTI*

4.5% OF GDP AT RISK

'Export sectors face higher risk from climate'

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

India's export-driven businesses in sectors such as aluminium, iron and steel that face international regulatory shocks are increasingly exposed to risk due to climate inaction threatening their profits, operations, and long-term viability, according to global consulting firm BCG.

India is among the top 10 countries most affected by extreme weather events, as the 'Climate Risk Index 2026' launched at COP30 reveals, and the cost of inaction for India is too big to ignore, BCG Managing Director and Senior Partner, Asia Pacific Leader, Climate & Sustainability, Sumit Gupta, told PTI in an emailed interview.

Citing data from RBI and WEF 2024, he said 4.5 per cent of India's GDP by 2030 is at massive risk of erosion due to climate-induced extreme events, and by the end of the century, climate-related challenges could cost India between 6.4 per cent and over 10 per cent of its national income.

India is among the top 10 countries most affected by extreme weather events **PHOTO: FREEPIK**

When asked about the financial implications of climate change on Indian companies and businesses, BCG Managing Director and Partner, India Lead, Climate & Sustainability, Anirban Mukherjee, said, "The impact is more pronounced today for export-driven businesses in India, especially hard-to-abate ones such as aluminium, iron and steel, that face international regulatory shocks."

EU's carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM) is expected to impact USD 7.7 billion or 10-11 per cent of India's export to the EU, he noted.

Mukherjee further said, "Climate inaction is increasingly exposing businesses to escalating risks that threaten profits, operations, and long-term viability."

BCG's estimates suggest that direct climate risks alone will put 5 per cent to 25 per cent of 2050 EBITDA at risk for global businesses, he added. *—PTI*

India's forex reserves drop by $4.5 billion

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

India's foreign exchange reserves declined by $4.472 billion in the week ending 21 November, settling at $688.104 billion, as reported by the Reserve Bank of India's latest 'Weekly Statistical Supplement'. This decrease is attributed to the drop in both foreign currency assets and gold reserves. Despite this downward trend, India's forex reserves remain close to their all-time high of $704.89 billion, achieved in September 2024.

As of the reported week, foreign currency assets (FCA), the largest component of the reserves, stood at $560.600 billion, down by $1.690 billion, while gold reserves decreased by $2.675 billion to $104.182 billion. The price of gold has surged recently amid increased global uncertainties and strong investment demand.

The RBI has confirmed that the current reserves are sufficient to cover over 11 months of merchandise imports. India's external sector is reported to be resilient, with the RBI confident in meeting its external obligations. In 2023, India added approximately $58 billion to its reserves, contrasting with a cumulative decline of $71 billion in 2022. The rupee, which has weakened by around 4 per cent this year, recently touched a record low near 89.4950. *—ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

Stands to be named after Kaur, Yuvraj at Mullanpur stadium

MULLANPUR, 30 NOV

The Punjab Cricket Association will immortalise India's World Cup-winning players Harmanpreet Kaur and Yuvraj Singh with stands named after them at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium in Mullanpur. The two new stands will be unveiled ahead of the fourth T20I between India and South Africa on 11 December. "Harmanpreet Kaur is being honored for her achievement in winning the World Cup, and we have announced that a proper stand will be named after her. On the 11th, during the India–South Africa match, we will inaugurate it. Along with that, the stand named after our former player and two-time World Cup champion Yuvraj Singh will also be inaugurated on the same day," officiating Secretary of PCA, Siddhant Sharma told IANS. *—PTI*

Tri-series final between India and AFG abandoned

BENGALURU, 30 NOV

Inclement weather forced the abandonment of the one-day tri-series final between India Under-19 and their Afghanistan counterparts here on Sunday. The India U19 were struggling at 79 for five in 19 overs when a combination of rain and bad light stopped the play, and the match never resumed from that point. Pacer Abdul Aziz did the early damage, taking the wickets of skipper Vihaan Malhotra and Vansh Acharya as Indian colts plummeted to 24 for four. But the skies opened soon to stop the proceedings. Brief scores: India U19: 79/5 in 19 overs (Kanishk Chouhan 28 not out, Abhigyan Kundu 27; Abdul Aziz 2/12).*—PTI*

Tete and Wilson's fast start earns Fulham victory

LONDON, 30 NOV

Kenny Tete was given space and grace to score, via a deflection off Destiny Udogie. Two minutes later, Guglielmo Vicario's mis-kick from way outside his own area, the Italian heading out on a wholly unscheduled safari, had been diverted to Harry Wilson by Josh King. Wilson guided his lob beautifully, the keeper stranded. The Italian stopper made a costly error for Spurs at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium as his poor clearance fell to Harry Wilson, who fired home into an empty net from range. That goal ended up being key in Spurs' 2-1 defeat to Fulham, a result that leaves them tenth in the Premier League table. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X/@NBA

Pacers sink Bulls on Pascal Siakam's buzzer shot

NEW YORK, 30 NOV

Pascal Siakam hit a 14-foot jumper at the buzzer and finished with 24 points and nine rebounds as the Indiana Pacers beat the Chicago Bulls 103-101 on Saturday night in Indianapolis.The Bulls' Tre Jones scored on a driving layup with 7.5 seconds left to tie the game before Siakam made a shot over two defenders to help the Pacers win back-to-back games for the first time this season.Bennedict Mathurin had 19 points for Indiana, which won for the fourth time in its first 20 games. Teammates Isaiah Jackson, Jay Huff and Andrew Nembhard each scored 14 points.Jones and Josh Giddey led Chicago with 17 points apiece. *—PTI*

1st ODI: Kohli scores his 83rd century vs SA

India seals a nervous 17-run win against South Africa

RANCHI, 30 NOV

Virat Kohli PHOTO: PTI

India defeated South Africa by 17 runs in a dramatic first ODI in Ranchi on Sunday. Virat Kohli smashed a record-extending 52nd ODI century, along with fifties from Rohit Sharma and stand-in skipper KL Rahul, to power India to a total of 349/8 in 50 overs. South Africa were reduced to 11/3 early on, as Harshit Rana took two wickets in one over with the new ball. However, stunning knocks from Matthew Breetzke, 72, Marco Jansen, 70, and Corbin Bosch, 67, ensured that SA dragged the game right to the end. India spinner Kuldeep Yadav finished with four wickets, including the dismissals of Jansen and Breetzke in the same over. With the win, India takes a 1-0 lead in the three-match series Virat Kohli completed his 83rd international century 52nd in One-Day Internationals during the India vs South Africa 1st ODI at the JSCA International Stadium in Ranchi on Sunday. Coincidentally, Kohli's century is also the 7000th individual hundred in Men's international cricket. Batting at number three, the 37-year-old came out to bat in the fourth over and added 136 runs for the second with Rohit Sharma in 109 deliveries. Kohli also went past the legendary Sachin Tendulkar as the batter with the most hundreds in one format of the game. Tendulkar has 51 Test hundreds, and Kohli now has 52 ODI tons.

His last ODI hundred at home came against New Zealand during the 2023 World Cup in Mumbai. His previous century came against Pakistan in February earlier this year in the Champions Trophy.

Rohit breaks Afridi's record for most ODI sixes in history

Rohit Sharma PHOTO: PTI

Rohit Sharma scored 57 runs off 51 balls in the first ODI against South Africa at the JSCA Stadium in Ranchi on Sunday.

Rohit hit five fours and three sixes. During the innings, he smashed the record for the most sixes in ODI cricket, bettering Shahid Afridi's haul of 351 sixes.

He was also involved in a 136-run second-wicket partnership with Virat Kohli, which put India in a commanding position. The home side was at 168 for two after 23 overs. *—PTI*

Treesa and Gayatri PHOTO: BAI MEDIA

Treesa-Gayatri win Syed Modi Int'l

LUCKNOW, 30 NOV

The Indian pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand retained the women's doubles crown, but Kidambi Srikanth's hopes of snapping an eight-year title drought went up in smoke as he suffered a heartbreaking loss in the final of the Syed Modi International Super 300 here Sunday.

Former winner Srikanth, a 2021 world championships silver medallist, went down 16-21, 21-8, 20-22 to world No. 59 Jason Gunawan of Hong Kong in a 67-minute thriller. The 32-year-old had last won a title in 2017 at the French Open and had come close earlier this year, finishing runner-up at the Malaysia Masters Super 500. Defending champions Treesa and Gayatri, however, produced an attacking masterclass to rally from a game down and outwit the world No. 35 pair of Japan's Kaho Osawa and Mai Tanabe 17-21 21-13 21-15 in a pulsating one-hour and 16-minute final. They were playing only their second event since Gayatri's return from a five-month shoulder injury layoff. Gunawan started strongly to go 4-1 ahead and went into the break with a three-point lead. Errors crept into the Indian's game soon after as his lifts floated long, helping Gunawan move to 14-10.

Srikanth answered with crisp smashes, but Gunawan stayed sharp, surging to 17-11 with a straight down-the-line winner.

The decider saw Srikanth move to 5-1, but Gunawan clawed back with a jaw-dropping retrieval that left Srikanth on the floor, narrowing the gap to 4-5 and was soon leading 6-5. *—PTI*

Divyanshi bags U15 TT bronze, U19 boys' team

CLUJ-NAPOCA, 30 NOV

Rising Indian table tennis player Divyanshi Bhowmick secured a bronze medal in the Under-15 girls' category at the ongoing ITTF World Youth Championships 2025 here on Sunday.In the semifinals, Divyanshi went down fighting against China's Zhu Qihui 4-1 (12-10, 10-12, 6-11, 4-11, 8-11) to settle for a bronze.

Before bowing out in the last-four stage, the young Indian displayed a strong performance, registering hard-fought victories over opponents from Europe, Korea, and Japan in previous rounds. This performance adds to a landmark season for the 15-year-old Indian.

Earlier this year, Divyanshi created history at the Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, becoming the first Indian in 36 years to clinch the U-15 girls singles continental title.Meanwhile, India added to the medal tally with strong team performances across categories.

The U-15 girls team, comprising Divyanshi, Ananya Muralidharan, Ankolika Chakraborty, and Naisha Rewaskar, clinched bronze.In the U-19 boys' team event, the quartet of Ankur Bhattacharjee, Abhinandh Pradhivadhi, Punit Biswas, and Priyanuj Bhattacharyya claimed a historic silver medal, marking the first-ever podium finish for India in the category. *—PTI*

SYED MUSHTAQ ALI TROPHY

Rajasthan edge K'taka in 1-run thriller; Ishan's 100 powers Jharkhand

AHMEDABAD, 30 NOV

Karnataka were sailing well at 133 for three in 14.5 overs, but they lost Karun, Abhinav Manohar, Shreyas Gopal, and Praveen Dubey cheaply, sliding to 155 for seven in 17.3 overs.

The timing too deserted Samran's batting at this stage, and unfortunately, he did not recover for the rest of his innings, hampering Karnataka.

But Vidyadhar Patil (27, 8b, 3x6, 2x4) used the long handle to good effect to take Karnataka to 184 in 18.5 overs before getting out to pacer Kamlesh Nagarkoti (3/52).

With 15 runs needed off the last over, a six by Vysakh Vijayakumar and a four by Smaran got Karnataka as close as three runs off the last ball, but all they could manage was a solitary run to fall agonisingly close to the target.

Earlier, quick 40s by Deepak Hooda, Kartik Sharma, and Mahipal Lomror helped Rajasthan post a total that saved the day for them, only just.

Pacers Vidyadhar and Vysakh took two wickets apiece for Karnataka.

Brief scores: Rajasthan: 201/5 in 20 overs (Mahipal Lomror 48 not out, Kartik Sharma 46, Deepak Hooda 43, Bharat Sharma 38; Vidyadhar Patil 2/41, Vysakh Vijayakumar 2/39) beat Karnataka: 200/8 in 20 overs (Karun Nair 51, R Smaran 48 not out, Devdutt Padikkal 32; Ashok Sharma 3/43, Kamlesh Nagarkoti 3/52) by 1 run.

Rajasthan: 4 points (Total: 12 points); Karnataka: 0 (Total: 4 points).

India wicketkeeper batter Ishan Kishan gave a timely reminder of his T20 prowess with a blistering 50-ball 113 that powered Jharkhand to an eight-wicket victory over Tripura in their Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy Group D match here on Sunday.

During his unbeaten knock, Kishan smashed 10 fours and eight sixes as Jharkhand overhauled Tripura's 182 for seven with 15 balls to spare, making 185 for two. *—PTI*

CWG 2030 in Ahmedabad to cost Rs 3,000-5,000 cr

NEW DELHI, 30 NOV

The soon-to-be-constituted Organising Committee of the 2030 Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad will be aiming to conduct the event at an operational cost of Rs 3,000 to Rs 5,000 crore.

According to a reliable source closely involved in the planning of the Games, estimates for ongoing infrastructure upgrade, including for both sports and public utility facilities, are still being worked out to finalise the overall cost of the mega-event.

The source said Gujarat has taken the "requisite lessons" from the handling of the 2010 Games in Delhi, which ended up mired in several controversies, including infrastructure delay, corruption charges, and costs that ballooned way past the initial estimates.

"The operational cost for the Ahmedabad CWG would come to Rs 3,000 to Rs 5,000 crore. This does not include funds (capital expenditure) that will go into building other infrastructure, some of it being handled by the urban development department," the source said.

"Obviously, the cost incurred for building public infrastructure will not be counted towards the Games, as the utility of that is going to be beyond the Games. It's a slightly long-drawn process, and we will need some time to come to a definitive estimate," he added.

The operational cost of the Games is the funds spent on the conduct of the games for the duration it is planned. Some of it can be offset by the revenue generated from avenues like gate tickets and commercial deals during the event. *—PTI*

Andre Russell announces retirement from IPL, joins KKR support staff

KOLKATA, 30 NOV

Swashbuckling all-rounder Andre Russell on Sunday announced his retirement from the Indian Premier League ahead of the mini auction scheduled for December 16, and will join three-time winners Kolkata Knight Riders' coaching staff.

The 37-year-old Russell, who has been an integral part of the KKR side since IPL 2014, will join their coaching staff as a "power coach" ahead of the 2026 edition, for which an auction will be held in Abu Dhabi.

"Hanging up my IPL boots... but not the swagger. What a ride it's been in the IPL — 12 seasons of memories, and a whole lot of love from the @KKRiders family," Russell wrote on X.

"I'll still be smashing sixes and taking wickets in every other league around the world. And the best part? I'm not leaving home... you'll see me in a new role, in KKR's Support Staff, as the POWER COACH of 2026. New chapter. Same energy. Forever a Knight," he added. "There have been a lot of conversations between Mr Venky Mysore and also Mr Shah Rukh Khan, about another chapter in my IPL journey. They have shown me love and respect and have appreciated whatever I've been doing on the field. To be in a familiar setup matters to me a lot," he said.

"When I heard that name 'Power Coach', I felt that it describes Andre Russell the best, because the power that I possess when I bat, the energy that I show in the field with the ball in hand, I can help in any department," Russell added. *—PTI*

Junior World Cup: Spain beat Belgium 2-0

MADURAI, 30 NOV

World No. 4 Spain placed themselves on course for a quarterfinal spot, beating Belgium 2-0 to register their second consecutive win in a Pool D match of the FIH Junior Men's Hockey World Cup here on Sunday.

Spain scored through Juan Prado's (20th minute) field strike and a penalty corner conversion by Bruno Avila in the 32nd minute to emerge winners.

Spain had earlier thrashed Egypt 8-0 in their tournament opener here on Friday.

With this win, Spain top Pool D with six points from two wins, ahead of world No. 7 Belgium, who have three points from two matches.

Spain will next play Namibia here on Tuesday, while Belgium will be up against Egypt the same day.

In another match of Pool D, Namibia beat Egypt 4-2.

Liam Bruys (23rd), James de Jager (26th), and Josh van der Merwe (32nd) scored three field goals for Namibia, while John-Paul Britz converted a penalty corner in the 60th minute. Egypt's goals were scored by Abdelrahman Kasem (28th) and Mohab Hegab (53rd). *—PTI*

FIRST MLS CUP FINAL

Messi, Inter Miami defeat New York

FORT LAUDERDALE, 30 NOV

Lionel Messi will play for another trophy. Jordi Alba and Sergio Busquets clearly aren't ready to begin their retirements, either.

Tadeo Allende scored three goals Alba and Busquets, a pair of longtime Messi teammates who will retire when this season ends, had the assists on his first two and Inter Miami topped New York City FC 5-1 on Saturday night for the Eastern Conference title and a berth in the MLS Cup final.

Mateo Silvetti scored in the 67th minute for Inter Miami, with Messi setting up that goal the 405th assist of his career for club and country, which is generally believed to be the most in soccer history.

Telasco Segovia scored off a heel pass from Alba in the 83rd minute to turn it into a runaway, and Allende finishing off the hat trick in the 89th minute was the final play.

"We have reached the final with a brotherhood of moving forward," Inter Miami coach Javier Mascherano said. "The power of one group can overcome many things."

Tennis star Carlos Alcaraz brought the East trophy onto the field to present to Inter Miami's ownership, before it was handed to Messi.

Fireworks, confetti and a ton of happy photos and hugs followed, but it was also clear this wasn't the trophy Inter Miami wants most.

"We have made a fantastic playoff run and are very deserving of reaching the final," Silvetti said in Spanish.

Inter Miami — the No. 3 seed in the East — will play host to either San Diego or Vancouver for the league title on Dec. 6 at 2:30 p.m. Eastern.

San Diego and Vancouver play for the Western Conference title later Saturday night. *—PTI*

Man United comes back to beat Crystal Palace

LONDON, 30 NOV

Joshua Zirkzee PHOTO: X/@MU

Joshua Zirkzee scored in the Premier League for the first time in almost a year to spark a 2-1 win for Manchester United at Crystal Palace on Sunday.

The Dutch forward hadn't scored in England's top flight since a double against Everton on Dec. 1 last year. But he ended his drought with a stunning strike in the 54th minute at Selhurst Park to level the game after Jean-Philippe Mateta put Palace ahead from the penalty spot in the first half. Mason Mount struck the winner nine minutes later as United ended Palace's 12-game unbeaten home run in the league.

Zirkzee produced a moment of individual brilliance to fire United back into the game when collecting the ball in the box, spinning and scoring from a tight angle. It was only his eighth goal in all for United since joining from Bologna last year and his first this season. *—PTI*